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FROM THE WRITINGS OF

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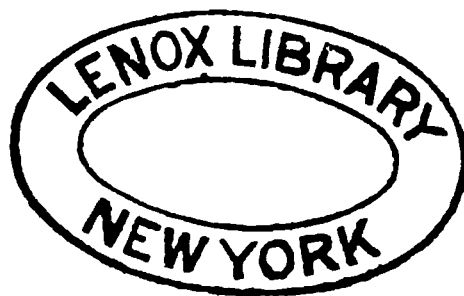
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HEAVEN UPON EARTH,

OR,

OF TRUE PEACE OF MIND.

SECTION I.

Censure of Philosophers.

WHEN I had studiously read over the moral writings of some wise heathen, especially those of the Stoical profession, I must confess, I found a little envy and pity striving together within me: I envied nature in them, to see her so witty in devising such plausible refuges for doubting and troubled minds; I pitied them, to see that their careful disquisition of true rest led them, in the end, but to mere unquietness. Wherein, methought, they were as hounds swift of foot, but not exquisite in scent; which, in a hasty pursuit, take a wrong way; spending their mouths and courses in vain. Their praise of guessing wittily they shall not lose: their hopes, both they lost, and whosoever follows them.

If Seneca could have had grace to his wit, what wonders would he have done in this kind! what divine might not have yielded him the chair, for Precepts of Tranquillity, without any disparagement? As he was, this he hath gained—never any heathen wrote more divinely; never any philosopher more probably.

Neither would I ever desire better master, if, to this purpose, I needed no other mistress than nature. But this, in truth, is a task, which nature hath never, without

presumption, undertaken; and never performed, without much imperfection: like to those vain and wandering empirics, which, in tables and pictures, make great ostentation of cures; never approving their skill to their credulous patients. And, if she could have truly effected it alone, I know not what employment in this life she should have left for grace to busy herself about, nor what privilege it should have been here below to be a Christian: since this, that we seek, is the noblest work of the soul; and in which alone, consists the only heaven of this world: this is the sum of all human desires; which when we have attained, then only we begin to live, and are sure we cannot thenceforth live miserably. No marvel then, if all the heathen have diligently sought after it; many wrote of it; none attained it. Not Athens must teach this lesson, but Jerusalem.

SECTION II.

What Tranquillity is, and wherein it consists.

YET something grace scorneth not to learn of nature; as Moses may take good counsel of a Midianite.

Nature hath ever had more skill in the end, than in the way to it; and, whether she have discoursed of the good estate of the mind, which we call Tranquillity, or the best, which is Happiness; hath more happily guessed at the general definition of them, than of the means to compass them.

She teacheth us therefore, without controulment, that the tranquillity of the mind is, as of the sea and weather, when no wind stirreth, when the waves do not tumultuously rise and fall upon each other; but when the face, both of the heaven and waters, is still, fair, and equable; that it is such an even disposition of the heart, wherein the scales of the mind neither rise up towards the beam, through their own lightness, or the over-weening opinion of prosperity, nor are too much depressed with any load of sorrow; but, hanging equal and unmoved betwixt

both, give a man liberty in all occurrences to enjoy himself.

Not that the most temperate mind can be so the master of his passions, as not sometimes to over-joy his grief, or over-grieve his joy, according to the contrary occasions of both: for not the evenest weights, but at their first putting into the balance, somewhat sway both parts thereof, not without some shew of inequality; which yet, after some little motion, settle themselves in a meet poise. It is enough, that, after some sudden agitation, it can return to itself; and rest itself, at last, in a resolved peace.

And this due composedness of mind we require unto our tranquillity, not for some short fits of good mood, which soon after end in discontentment; but with the condition of perpetuity: for there is no heart makes so rough weather, as not sometimes to admit of a calm; and, whether for that he knoweth no present cause of his trouble, or for that he knoweth that cause of trouble is countervailed with as great an occasion of private joy, or for that the multitude of evils hath bred carelessness, the man, that is most disordered, finds some respites of quietness. The balances, that are most ill matched, in their unsteady motions come to an equality, but not stay at it. The frantic man cannot avoid the imputation of madness, though he be sober for many moons, if he rage in one.

So then, the calm mind must be settled in a habitual rest: not then firm, when there is nothing to shake it; but then least shaken, when it is most assailed.

SECTION III.

Insufficiency of human Precepts.—Seneca's Rules of Tranquillity abridged.—Rejected as insufficient.—Disposition of the Work.

WHENCE easily appears, how vainly it hath been sought, either in such a constant estate of outward things, as

should give no distaste to the mind, while all earthly things vary with the weather, and have no stay but in uncertainty; or, in the natural temper of the soul, so ordered by human wisdom, as that it should not be affected with any casual events to either part: since that cannot ever, by natural power, be held like to itself; but, one while, is cheerful, stirring, and ready to undertake; another while, drowsy, dull, comfortless, prone to rest, weary of itself, loathing its own purposes, its own resolutions.

In both which, since the wisest philosophers have grounded all the rules of their tranquillity, it is plain that they saw it afar off, as they did heaven itself, with a desire and admiration, but knew not the way to it: whereupon, alas, how slight and impotent are the remedies they prescribe for unquietness! For what is it, that, for the inconstancy and laziness of the mind, still displeasing itself in what it doth; and, for that distemper thereof, which ariseth from the fearful, unthriving, and restless desires of it; we should ever be employing ourselves in some public affairs, choosing our business according to our inclination, and prosecuting what we have chosen? wherewith being at last cloyed, we should retire ourselves, and wear the rest of our time in private studies? that we should make due comparative trials of our own ability, nature of our businesses, disposition of our chosen friends? that, in respect of patrimony, we should be but carelessly affected; so drawing it in, as it may be least for shew, most for use; removing all pomp, bridling our hopes, cutting off superfluities? for crosses, to consider, that custom will abate and mitigate them; that the best things are but chains and burdens to those that have them, to those that use them; that the worst things have some mixture of comfort, to those that groan under them? Or, leaving these lower rudiments that are given to weak and simple novices, to examine those golden rules of morality which are commended to the most wise and able practitioners; what is it, to account himself as a tenant at will; to fore-imagine the worst, in all casual matters; to avoid all idle and impertinent businesses, all pragmatistical meddling with affairs of state; not so to fix ourselves

upon any one estate, as to be impatient of a change; to call back the mind from outward things, and draw it home into itself; to laugh at and esteem lightly of others' misdemeanors; not to depend upon others' opinions, but to stand on our own bottoms; to carry ourselves in an honest and simple truth, free from a curious hypocrisy, and affectation of seeming other than we are, and yet as free from a base kind of carelessness; to intermeddle retiredness with society, so as one may give sweetness to the other, and both to us, so slackening the mind that we may not loosen it, and so bending as we may not break it; to make the most of ourselves, cheering up our spirits with variety of recreations, with satiety of meals, and all other bodily indulgence, saving that drunkenness, methinks, can neither beseem a wise philosopher to prescribe, nor a virtuous man to practise? All these, in their kinds, please well, profit much, and are as sovereign for both these, as they are unable to effect that, for which they are propounded.*

Nature teacheth thee all these should be done; she cannot teach thee to do them: and yet do all these and no more, let me never have rest, if thou have it. For, neither are here the greatest enemies of our peace so much as descried afar off; nor those, that are noted, are hereby so prevented, that, upon most diligent practice, we can promise ourselves any security: wherewith whoso instructed, dare confidently give challenge to all sinister events, is like to some skilful fencer, who stands upon his usual wards, and plays well; but, if there come a strange fetch of an unwonted blow, is put beside the rules of his art, and with much shame overtaken. And, for those, that are known, believe me, the mind of man is too weak to bear out itself hereby, against all onsets. There are light crosses, that will take an easy repulse; others yet stronger, that shake the house side, but break not in upon us; others vehement, which by force make way to the heart; where they find none, breaking open the door of the soul, that denies entrance; others violent, that lift the mind off the hinges, or rend the bars of it in

* Allowed yet by Seneca in his last chapter of *Tranquillity*.

pieces; others furious, that tear up the very foundations from the bottom, leaving no monument behind them, but ruin. The wisest and most resolute moralist, that ever was, looked pale when he should taste of his hemlock; and, by his timorousness, made sport to those, that envied his speculations. The best* of the heathen Emperors, that was honoured with the title of piety, justly magnified that courage of Christians, which made them insult over their tormentors; and, by their fearlessness of earthquakes and deaths, argued the truth of their religion. It must be, it can be, none but a divine power, that can uphold the mind against the rage of many afflictions; and yet, the greatest crosses are not the greatest enemies to inward peace. Let us, therefore, look up above ourselves; and, from the rules of a higher art, supply the defects of natural wisdom: giving such infallible directions for tranquillity, that whosoever shall follow cannot but live sweetly with continual delight; applauding himself at home, when all the world beside him shall be miserable.

To which purpose, it shall be requisite, first, to remove all causes of unquietness; and then, to set down the grounds of our happy rest.

SECTION IV.

Enemies of inward Peace divided into their Ranks.—The Torment of an evil Conscience.—The Joy and Peace of the Guilty but dissembled.

I FIND, on the one hand, two universal enemies of tranquillity—conscience of evil done, sense or fear of evil suffered. The former in one word, we call sins; the latter, crosses: the first of these must be quite taken away, the second duly tempered, ere the heart can be at rest. For, first, how can that man be at peace, that is at va-

* Antoninus Pius, in an Epistle to the Asians concerning the persecuted Christians.

riance with God and himself? How should peace be God's gift, if it could be without him, if it could be against him? It is the profession of sin, although fair spoken at the first closing, to be a perpetual make-bait betwixt God and man, betwixt a man and himself.

And this enmity, though it do not continually shew itself, as the mortallest enemies are not always in pitched fields one against the other; for that the conscience is not ever clamorous, but sometime is silent, otherwhile with still murmurings bewrays his mislikes; yet doth evermore work secret unquietness to the heart. The guilty man may have a seeming truce; a true peace, he cannot have. Look upon the face of the guilty heart, and thou shalt see it pale and ghastly; the smiles and laughters, faint and heartless; the speeches, doubtful and full of abrupt stops and unseasonable turnings; the purposes and motions, unsteady and savouring of much distraction, arguing plainly that sin is not so smooth at her first motions, as turbulent afterwards: hence are those vain wearyings of places and companies, together with ourselves; that the galled soul doth, after the wont of sick patients, seek refreshing in variety, and, after many tossed and turned sides, complains of remediless and unabated torment. Nero, after so much innocent blood, may change his bed-chamber; but his fiends ever attend him, ever are within him, and are as parts of himself. Alas, what avails it, to seek outward reliefs, when thou hast thine executioner within thee? If thou couldst shift from thyself, thou mightest have some hope of ease: now, thou shalt never want furies, so long as thou hast thyself. Yea, what if thou wouldst run from thyself? Thy soul may fly from thy body: thy conscience will not fly from thy soul, nor thy sin from thy conscience. Some men, indeed, in the bitterness of these pangs of sin, like unto those fondly impatient fishes that leap out of the pan into the flame, have leapt out of this private hell, that is in themselves, into the common pit; choosing to adventure upon the future pains that they have feared, rather than to endure the present horrors they have felt: wherein what have they gained, but to that hell which was within them, a second hell without? The conscience leaves not, where the fiends begin; but doth join together in torture.

But, there are some firm and obdurate foreheads, whose resolution can laugh their sins out of countenance. There are so large and able gorges, as that they can swallow and digest bloody murders, without complaint; who, with the same hands, which they have since their last meal embrued in blood, can freely carve to themselves large morsels at the next sitting. Believest thou, that such a man's heart laughs with his face? will not he dare to be a hypocrite, that durst be a villain? These glow-worms, when a night of sorrow compasses them, make a lightsome and fiery shew of joy; when, if thou press them, thou findest nothing but a cold and crude moisture. Knowest thou not, that there are those, which count it no shame to sin; yet count it a shame to be checked with remorse, especially so as others' eyes may descry: to whom repentance seems base-mindedness, unworthy of him that professes wisdom and valour? Such a man can grieve, when none sees it; but himself can laugh, when others see it; himself, feels not. Assure thyself, that man's heart bleedeth, when his face counterfeits a smile: he wears out many waking hours, when thou thinkest he resteth: yea, as his thoughts afford him not sleep, so his very sleep affords him not rest; but, while his senses are tied up, his sin is loose; representing itself to him in the ugliest shape, and frightening him with horrible and hellish dreams. And if, perhaps, custom hath bred a carelessness in him, as we see that usual whipping makes the child not care for the rod: yet an unwonted extremity of the blow shall fetch blood of the soul; and make the back, that is most hardened, sensible of smart; and, the further the blow is fetched, through intermission of remorse, the harder it must needs alight. Therefore, I may confidently tell the careless sinner, as that bold tragedian said to his great Pompey: "The time shall come, wherein thou shalt fetch deep sighs; and therefore shalt sorrow desperately, because thou sorrowest not sooner." The fire of the conscience may lie, for a time, smothered with a pile of green wood, that it cannot be discerned; whose moisture when once it hath mastered, it sends up so much greater flame, by how much it had greater resistance. Hope not then, to stop the mouth of thy conscience from exclaiming, while

thy sin continues : that endeavour is both vain and hurtful. So I have seen them, that have stopt the nostril for bleeding, in hope to stay the issue ; when the blood, hindered in its former course, hath broken out of the mouth, or found way down into the stomach. The conscience is not pacifiable, while sin is within to vex it ; no more than an angry swelling can cease throbbing and aching, while the thorn or the corrupted matter lies rotting underneath. Time, that remedies all other evils of the mind, increaseth this ; which, like to bodily diseases, proves worse with continuance, and grows upon us with our age.

SECTION V.

The Remedy of an unquiet Conscience.

THERE can be, therefore, no peace, without reconciliation. Thou canst not be friends with thyself, till with God ; for thy conscience, which is thy best friend while thou sinnest not, like an honest servant takes his Master's part against thee when thou hast sinned ; and will not look straight upon thee, till thou upon God ; not daring to be so kind to thee, as to be unfaithful to his Maker.

There can be no reconciliation, without remission. God can neither forget the injury of sin, nor dissemble hatred. It is for men and those of hollow hearts, to make pretences contrary to their affections : soothings, and smiles, and embracements, where we mean not love, are from weakness ; either for that we fear our insufficiency of present revenge, or hope for a fitter opportunity afterwards, or for that we desire to make our further advantage of him to whom we mean evil. These courses are not incident to an Almighty power ; who, having the command of all vengeance, can smite where he list, without all doubtings or delays.

There can be no remission, without satisfaction. Neither dealeth God with us, as we men with some desperate debtors ; whom, after long dilations of payments and many days broken, we altogether let go for disability, or at least

dismiss them upon an easy composition. All sins are debts: all God's debts must be discharged. It is a bold word, but a true; God should not be just, if any of his debts should pass unsatisfied. The conceit of the profane, vulgar makes him a God of all mercies; and, thereupon, hopes for pardon, without payment. Fond and ignorant presumption, to disjoin mercy and justice in him, to whom they are both essential; to make mercy exceed justice in him, in whom both are infinite! Darest thou hope God can be so kind to thee, as to be unjust to himself? God will be just: go thou on to presume and perish.

There can be no satisfaction, by any recompence of ours. An infinite justice is offended: an infinite punishment is deserved by every sin: and every man's sins are as near to infinite, as number can make them. Our best endeavour is worse than finite, imperfect, and faulty: if it could be perfect, we owe it all in present: what we are bound to do in present, cannot make amends for what we have not done in time past; which while we offer to God as good payment, we do, with the profane traveller, think to please him with empty date-shells, in lieu of preservation. Where shall we then find a payment of infinite value, but in him, which is only and all infinite? the dignity of whose person, being infinite, gave such worth to his satisfaction, that what he suffered in short time, was proportionable to what we should have suffered beyond all times. He did all, suffered all, paid all; he did it for us; we, in him.

Where shall I begin to wonder at thee, O thou divine and eternal Peace-Maker, the Saviour of men, the Anointed of God, Mediator between God and man: in whom there is nothing, which doth not exceed, not only the conceit, but the very wonder of Angels, who saw thee in thy humiliation with silence, and adore thee in thy glory with perpetual praises and rejoicings? Thou wast for ever of thyself, as God; of the Father, as the Son; the eternal Son of an eternal Father; not later in being, not less in dignity, not other in substance; begotten, without diminution of him that begot thee, while he communicated that wholly to thee, which he retained wholly in himself, because both were infinite without inequality of nature, without division of essence: when, being in this estate, thine

infinite love and mercy to desperate mankind caused thee, O Saviour, to empty thyself of thy glory, that thou mightest put on our shame and misery. Wherefore, not ceasing to be God as thou wert, thou beganst to be what thou wert not; man; to the end that thou mightest be a perfect Mediator betwixt God and man, which thou wert both in one person; God, that thou mightest satisfy; man, that thou mightest suffer: that, since man had sinned, and God was offended, thou, which wert God and man, mightest satisfy God for man. None but thyself, which art the Eternal Word, can express the depth of this mystery, that God should be clothed with flesh, come down to men, and become man: that man might be exalted into the highest heavens, and that our nature might be taken into the fellowship of the Deity: that he, to whom all powers in heaven bowed, and thought it their honour to be serviceable, should come down to be a servant to his slaves, a ransom for his enemies; together with our nature taking up our very infirmities, our shame, our torments, and bearing our sins without sin: that thou, whom the heavens were too strait to contain, shouldest lay thyself in an obscure cratch; thou, which wert attended of angels, shouldest be derided of men, rejected of thine own, persecuted by tyrants, tempted with devils, betrayed of thy servant, crucified among thieves, and, which was worse than all these, in thine own apprehension, for the time, as forsaken of thy Father: that thou, whom our sins had pierced, shouldest, for our sins, both sweat drops of blood in the garden, and pour out streams of blood upon the cross.

O the invaluable purchase of our peace! O ransom enough for more worlds! Thou, which wert, in the counsel of thy Father, the Lamb slain from the beginning of time, camest now, in fulness of time, to be slain by man, for man; being, at once, the sacrifice offered, the priest that did offer, and the God to whom it was offered. How graciously didst thou both proclaim our peace, as a prophet, in the time of thy life upon earth; and purchase it, by thy blood, as a priest, at thy death; and now confirmest and appliest it, as a king, in heaven! By thee only it was procured; by thee, it is proffered. O mercy without example, without measure! God offers peace to

man: the holy seeks to the unjust; the potter, to the clay; the king, to the traitor. We are unworthy, that we should be received to peace, though we desired it: what are we then, that we should have peace offered for the receiving? An easy condition of so great a benefit! he requires us not to earn it, but to accept it of him: what could he give more? what could he require less of us?

SECTION VI.

The Receipt of our Peace offered by Faith.—A Corollary of the Benefit of this Receipt.—The vain Shifts of the Guilty.

THE purchase, therefore, of our peace was paid at once; yet must be severally reckoned to every soul, whom it shall benefit. If we have not a hand to take what Christ's hand doth either hold or offer, what is sufficient in him cannot be effectual to us. The spiritual hand, whereby we apprehend the sweet offers of our Saviour, is faith; which, in short, is no other than an affiance in the Mediator. Receive peace, and be happy; believe, and thou hast received. From hence it is, that we are interested in all, that either God hath promised, or Christ hath performed: hence have we from God, both forgiveness and love; the ground of all, either peace or glory: hence, of enemies we become, more than friends, sons; and, as sons, may both expect and challenge, not only careful provision and safe protection on earth, but an everlasting patrimony above. This field is so spacious, that it were easy for a man to lose himself in it: and if I should spend all my pilgrimage in this walk, my time would sooner end than my way; wherein I would have measured more paces, were it not, that our scope is not so much to magnify the benefit of our peace, as to seek how to obtain it.

Behold now, after we have sought heaven and earth, where only the wearied dove may find an olive of peace. The apprehending of this all-sufficient satisfaction, makes it ours; upon our satisfaction, we have remission; upon

remission, follows reconciliation ; upon our reconciliation, peace. When, therefore, thy conscience, like a stern sergeant, shall catch thee by the throat, and arrest thee upon God's debt, let thy only plea be, that thou hast already paid it : bring forth that bloody acquittance, sealed to thee from heaven upon thy true faith ; straight-way, thou shalt see the fierce and terrible look of thy conscience changed into friendly smiles ; and that rough and violent hand, that was ready to drag thee to prison, shall now lovingly embrace thee, and fight for thee against all the wrongful attempts of thy spiritual adversary. O heavenly peace, and more than peace, friendship ; whereby alone we are leagued with ourselves, and God with us ; which whoever wants, shall find a sad remembrancer in the midst of his dissembled jollity, and, after all vain strifes, shall into many secret dumps, from which his guilty heart shall deny to be cheered, though all the world were his minstrel ! O pleasure worthy to be pitied, and laughter worthy of tears, that is without this !

.Go then, foolish man ; and, when thou feelest any check of thy sin, seek after thy jocundest companions ; deceive the time and thyself with merry purposes, with busy games ; feast away thy cares ; bury them and thyself in wine and sleep : after all these frivolous deferrings, it will return upon thee when thou wakest, perhaps ere thou wakest ; nor will it be repelled, till it have shewed thee thy hell ; nor when it hath shewed thee, will yet be repelled. So the stricken deer, having received a deadly arrow, whose shaft shaken out hath left the head behind it, runs from one thicket to another ; not able to change his pain with his places, but finding his wounds still the worse with continuance. Ah fool, thy soul festereth within ; and is affected so much more dangerously, by how much less it appeareth. Thou mayest while thyself with variety : thou canst not ease thee. Sin owes thee a spite, and will pay it thee ; perhaps when thou art in worse case to sustain it. This flitting doth but provide for a further violence at last. I have seen a little stream of no noise, which, upon its stoppage, hath swelled up ; and, with a loud gushing, hath borne over the heap of turfs wherewith it was resisted. Thy death-bed shall

smart for these wilful adjournings of repentance : whereon how many have we heard raving of their old neglected sins, and fearfully despairing when they have had most need of comfort ! In sum, there is no way but this : thy conscience must have either satisfaction or torment. Discharge thy sin betimes, and be at peace. He never breaks his sleep for debt, that pays when he takes up.

SECTION VII.

Solicitation of Sin remedied.—The ordering of Affections.

NEITHER can it suffice for peace, to have crossed the old scroll of our sins, if we prevent not the future : yea, the present very importunity of temptation breeds unquietness. Sin, where it hath got a haunt, looketh for more ; as humours, that fall towards their old issue : and, if it be not strongly repelled, doth near as much vex us with soliciting, as with yielding. Let others envy their happiness, I shall never think their life so much as quiet, whose doors are continually beaten, and their morning sleep broken with early clients ; whose entries are daily thronged with suitors, pressing near for the next audience : much less, that, through their remiss answers, are daily haunted with traitors or other instruments of villany, offering their mischievous service, and inciting them to some pestilent enterprise. Such are temptations to the soul : whereof it cannot be rid, so long as it holds them in any hope of entertainment ; and so long they will hope to prevail, while we give them but a cold and timorous denial. Suitors are drawn on with an easy repulse ; counting that as half granted, which is but faintly gain-said. Peremptory answers can only put sin out of heart, for any second attempts : it is ever impudent, when it meets not with a bold heart ; hoping to prevail by wearying us, and wearying us by entreaties. Let all suggestions, therefore, find thee resolute ; so shall thy soul find itself at rest ; for, as the Devil, so sin his natural brood, flies away with resistance.

To which purpose, all our heady and disordered affections, which are the secret factors of sin and Satan, must be restrained, by a strong and yet temperate command of reason and religion: these, if they find the reins loose in their necks, like to the wild horses of that chaste hunter in the tragedy, carry us over hills and rocks; and never leave us till we be dismembered, and they breathless: but, contrarily, if they be pulled in with the sudden violence of a straight hand, they fall to plunging and careering; and never leave, till their saddle be empty, and even then dangerously strike at their prostrate rider. If there be any exercise of Christian wisdom, it is in the managing of these unruly affections; which are not more necessary in their best use, than pernicious in their misgovernance. Reason hath always been busy, in undertaking this so necessary a moderation: wherein, although she have prevailed with some of colder temper; yet those which have been of more stubborn metal, like unto grown scholars, which scorn the ferule that ruled their minority, have still despised her weak endeavours. Only Christianity hath this power; which, with our second birth, gives us a new nature: so that now, if excess of passions be natural to us as men, the order of them is natural to us as Christians. Reason bids the angry man say over his alphabet, ere he give his answer; hoping, by this intermission of time, to gain the mitigation of his rage: he was never thoroughly angry, that can endure the recital of so many idle letters. Christianity gives not rules, but power, to avoid this short madness. It was a wise speech, that is reported of our best and last cardinal, I hope, that this Island either did or shall see; who, when a skilful astrologer, upon the calculation of his nativity, had foretold him some specialties concerning his future estate, answered, "Such perhaps I was born: but, since that time, I have been born again; and my second nativity hath crossed my first." The power of nature is a good plea for those, that acknowledge nothing above nature: but, for a Christian to excuse his intemperateness, by his natural inclination, and to say, "I was born choleric, sullen, amorous," is an apology worse than the fault. Wherefore serves religion, but to subdue or govern

nature? We are so much Christians, as we can rule ourselves: the rest is but form and speculation. Yea, the very thought of our profession is so powerful, that, like unto that precious stone, being cast into this sea, it assaugeth those inward tempests, that were raised by the affections. The unregenerate mind is not capable of this power; and, therefore, through the continual mutinies of his passions, cannot but be subject to perpetual unquietness. There is neither remedy, nor hope, in this estate. But the Christian soul, that hath inured itself to the awe of God and the exercises of true mortification, by the only looking up at his holy profession, cureth the burning venom of these fiery serpents that lurk within him. Hast thou nothing, but nature? Resolve to look for no peace. God is not prodigal, to cast away his best blessings on so unworthy subjects. Art thou a Christian? do but remember thou art so; and then, if thou darest, if thou canst, yield to the excess of passions.

SECTION VIII.

The second main Enemy to Peace, Crosses.

HITHERTO, the most inward and dangerous enemy of our peace: which if we have once mastered, the other field shall be fought and won with less blood. Crosses disquiet us, either in their present feeling, or their expectation: both of them, when they meet with weak minds, so extremely distempering them, that the patient, for the time, is not himself. How many have we known, which, through a lingering disease, weary of their pain, weary of their lives, have made their own hands their executioners! How many, meeting with a headstrong grief, which they could not manage, have, by the violence of it, been carried quite from their wits! How many millions, what for incurable maladies, what for losses, what for defamations, what for sad accidents to their children, rub out their lives in perpetual discontentment; therefore living, because they cannot yet die, not for that they like

to live ! If there could be any human receipt prescribed to avoid evils, it would be purchased at a high rate : but, both it is impossible, that earth should redress that which is sent from heaven ! and, if it could be done, even the want of miseries would prove miserable : for the mind, cloyed with continual felicity, would grow a burden to itself, loathing that, at last, which intermission would have made pleasant. Give a free horse the full reins, and he will soon tire. Summer is the sweetest season by all consents, wherein the earth is both most rich with increase, and most gorgeous for ornament ; yet, if it were not received with interchanges of cold frosts and piercing winds, who could live ? Summer would be no summer, if winter did not both lead it in, and follow it. We may not, therefore, either hope or strive, to escape all crosses ; some, we may : what thou canst, fly from ; what thou canst not, allay and mitigate. In crosses universally, let this be thy rule : Make thyself none ; escape some ; bear the rest ; sweeten all.

SECTION IX.

Of Crosses that arise from Conceit.

APPREHENSION gives life to crosses ; and if some be simply, most are as they are taken. I have seen many, which when God hath meant them no hurt, have framed themselves crosses out of imagination ; and have found that insupportable for weight, which in truth never was, neither had ever any but a fancied being : others again, laughing out heavy afflictions, for which they were be-moaned of the beholders. One receives a deadly wound ; and looks not so much as pale at the smart ; another hears of many losses ; and, like Zeno, after news of his shipwreck, as altogether passionless, goes to his rest, not breaking an hour's sleep for that, which would break the heart of some others. Greenham, that saint of ours, whom it cannot disparage, that he was reserved for our so loose an age, can lie spread quietly upon the form,

looking for the surgeon's knife; binding himself as fast with a resolved patience, as others with strongest cords; abiding his flesh carved, and his bowels rifled, and not stirring more than if he felt not, while others tremble to expect, and shrink to feel but the pricking of a vein. There can be no remedy for imaginary crosses, but wisdom; which shall teach us to esteem of all events as they are: like a true glass representing all things to our minds in their due proportion; so as crosses may not seem that are not, nor little and gentle ones seem great and intolerable. Give thy body hellebore, thy mind good counsel, thine ear to thy friend; and these fantastical evils shall vanish away like themselves.

SECTION X.

Of true and real Crosses.

It were idle advice, to bid men avoid evils. Nature hath by a secret instinct, taught brute creatures so much, whether wit or sagacity: and our self-love making the best advantage of reason, will easily make us so wise and careful. It is more worth our labour, since our life is so open to calamities, and nature to impatience, to teach men to bear what evils they cannot avoid; and how, by a well-disposedness of mind, we may correct the iniquity of all hard events. Wherein it is hardly credible, how much good art and precepts of resolution may avail us. I have seen one man, by the help of a little engine, lift up that weight alone, which forty helping hands, by their clear strength, might have endeavoured in vain. We live here in an ocean of troubles, wherein we can see no firm land; one wave falling upon another, ere the former have wrought all his spite. Mischiefs strive for places; as if they feared to lose their room, if they hasted not. So many good things as we have, so many evils arise from their privation: besides no fewer real and positive evils, that afflict us. To prescribe and apply receipts to every particular cross, were to write a Salmeron-like commen-

tary upon Petrarch's Remedies ; and I doubt whether so, the work would be perfect: a life would be too little to write it, and but enough to read it.

SECTION XI.

The first Remedy of Crosses, before they come.

THE same medicines cannot help all diseases of the body: of the soul they may. We see fencers give their scholars the same common rules of position, of warding and weilding their weapon for offence, for defence, against all comers: such universal precepts there are for crosses.

In the first whereof, I would prescribe expectation, that either killeth or abateth evils. For crosses, after the nature of the cockatrice, die, if they be foreseen; whether this providence makes us more strong to resist, or by some secret power makes them more unable to assault us. It is not credible, what a fore-resolved mind can do, can suffer. Could our English Milo, of whom Spain yet speaketh since their last peace, have overthrown that furious beast, made now more violent through the rage of his baiting, if he had not settled himself in his station, and expected? The frightened multitude ran away from that over-earnest sport, which begun in pleasure, ended in terror. If he had turned his back with the rest, where had been his safety, where his glory and reward? Now he stood still, expected, overcame, by one fact he at once preserved, honoured, enriched himself. Evils will come never the sooner, for that thou lookest for them; they will come the easier: it is a labour well lost, if they come not; and well bestowed, if they do come. We are sure the worst may come; why should we be secure that it will not; Suddenness finds weak minds secure, makes them miserable, leaves them desperate. The best way therefore is, to make things present, in conceit, before they come: that they may be half past in their violence, when they do come: even as with wooden wasters, we learn to play at the sharp. As, therefore, good soldiers exercise themselves long at the pale; and there

use those activities, which afterwards they shall practice upon a true adversary; so must we present to ourselves imaginary crosses; and manage them in our mind, before God sends them in event. Now I eat, sleep, digest, all soundly, without complaint: what if a languishing disease should bereave me of my appetite and rest? that I should see dainties, and loath them; surfeiting of the very smell, of the thought of the best dishes? that I should count the lingering hours, and think Hezekiah's long day returned; wearying myself with changing sides, and wishing any thing but what I am? how could I take this distemper? Now I have, if not what I would, yet what I need; as not abounding with idle superfluities, so not straitened with penury of necessary things: what if poverty should rush upon me, as an armed man; spoiling me of all my little that I had, and send me to the fountain, for my best cellar? to the ground, for my bed? for my bread, to another's cupboard? for my clothes, to the broker's shop, or my friend's wardrobe? how could I brook this want? I am now at home, walking in mine own grounds; looking on my young plants, the hope of posterity; considering the nature, advantages, or fears of my soil, enjoying the patrimony of my fathers: what if, for my religion, or the malicious sentence of some great one, I should be exiled from my country, wandering amongst those whose habit, language, fashion, my ignorance shall make me wonder at; where the solitude of places, and strangeness of persons, shall make my life uncomfortable? How could I abide the smell of foreign smoke? How should I take the contempt and hard usage, that wait upon strangers?" Thy prosperity is idle and ill spent, if it be not meddled with such fore-casting and wisely suspicious thoughts; if it be wholly bestowed in enjoying, no whit in preventing: like unto a foolish city, which, notwithstanding a dangerous situation, spends all her wealth in rich furnitures of chambers and state-houses; while they bestow not one shovelful of earth on outward bulwarks, to their defence: this is but to make our enemies the happier, and ourselves the more readily miserable.

If thou wilt not, therefore, be oppressed with evils, expect and exercise. Exercise thyself with conceit of evils:

expect the evils themselves; yea exercise thyself in expectation: so, while the mind pleaseth itself in thinking, "Yet I am not thus," it prepareth itself against it may be so. And if some who have been good at the foils, have proved cowardly at the sharp; yet, on the contrary, who ever durst point a single combat in the field, that hath not been somewhat trained in the fence-school?

SECTION XII.

The second Remedy of Crosses, when they are come; from their Author.

NEITHER doth it a little blunt the edge of evils, to consider that they come from a divine hand, whose almighty power is guided by a most wise providence, and tempered with a fatherly love. Even the savage creatures will be smitten of their keeper and repine not: if of a stranger, they tear him in pieces. He strikes me that made me, that moderates the world: why struggle I with him; why, with myself? Am I a fool, or a rebel? O fool, if I am ignorant whence my crosses come; a rebel, if I know it, and am impatient. My sufferings are from a God; from my God: he hath destined me every dram of sorrow, that I feel; "Thus much thou shalt abide; and here shall thy miseries be stinted." All worldly helps cannot abate them: all powers of hell cannot add one scruple to their weight, that he hath allotted me: I must therefore either blaspheme God in my heart, detracting from his infinite justice, wisdom, power, mercy, which all stand inviolable, when millions of such worms as I am, are gone to dust; or else confess, that I ought to be patient. And, if I profess I should be that I will not, I befool myself; and bewray miserable impotency. But, as impatience is full of excuse; it was thine own rash improvidence, or the spite of thine enemy, that impoverished, that defamed thee: it was the malignity of some unwholesome dish, or some gross corrupted air, that hath distempered thee. Ah foolish cur, why dost thou bite at the stone, which could never have

hurt thee, but from the hand that threw it? If I wound thee, what matters it, whether with mine own sword, or thine, or another's? God strikes some immediately from heaven, with his own arm, or with the arm of angels; others, he buffets, with their own hands: some, by the revenging sword of an enemy; others, with the fist of his dumb creatures: God strikes in all: his hand moves theirs. If thou see it not, blame thy carnal eyes. Why dost thou fault the instrument, while thou knowest the agent? Even the dying thief pardons the executioner; exclaims on his unjust judge, or his malicious accusers. Either, then, blame the first mover, or discharge the means: which as they could not have touched thee, but as from him; so from him they have afflicted thee justly, wrongfully perhaps as in themselves.

SECTION XIII.

The third Antidote of Crosses; from their Effect.

BUT neither seemeth it enough to be patient in crosses, if we be not thankful also. Good things challenge more than bare contentment. Crosses, unjustly termed evils, as they are sent of him, that is all goodness; so they are sent for good, and his end cannot be frustrated. What greater good can be to the diseased man, than fit and proper physic to recure him? Crosses are the only medicines of sick minds. Thy sound body carries within it a sick soul: thou feelest it not, perhaps: so much more art thou sick, and so much more dangerously. Perhaps, thou labourest of some plethora of pride, or of some dropsy of covetousness, or the staggers of inconstancy, or some fever of luxury, or consumption of envy, or perhaps of the lethargy of idleness, or of the phrensy of anger: it is a rare soul, that hath not some notable disease: only crosses are thy remedies. What if they be unpleasant? they are physic: it is enough, if they be wholesome. Not pleasant taste, but the secret virtue commends medicines. If they cure thee, they shall please thee, even in displeasing; or else thou lovest thy

palate above thy soul. What madness is this? When thou complainest of a bodily disease, thou sendest to the physician, that he may send thee not savoury, but wholesome potions: thou receivest them in spite of thine abhorring stomach; and, withal, both thankest and rewardest the physician. Thy soul is sick: thy heavenly Physician sees it, and pities thee, ere thou thyself; and, unsent to, sends thee not a plausible, but a sovereign remedy: thou loathest the savour; and rather wilt hazard thy life, than offend thy palate; and, instead of thanks repinest at, revilest the Physician. How comes it, that we love ourselves so little (if at least we count our souls the best or any part) as that we would rather undergo death than pain; choosing rather wilful sickness, than a harsh remedy? Surely, we men are mere fools, in the estimation of our own good: like children, our choice is led altogether by shew, no whit by substance. We cry after every well-seeming toy; and put from us solid proffers of good things: the wise Arbitrator of all things sees our folly, and corrects it: withholding our idle desires, and forcing upon us the sound good we refuse: it is second folly in us, if we thank him not. The foolish babe cries for his father's bright knife, or gilded pills: the wiser father knows that they can but hurt him; and therefore withholds them after all his tears: the child thinks he is used but unkindly: every wise man, and himself at more years, can say, it was but childish folly, in desiring it, in complaining that he missed it. The loss of wealth, friends, health, is sometimes gain to us. Thy body, thy estate is worse: thy soul is better; why complainest thou?

SECTION XIV.

The fourth Antidote of Crosses; from their Issue.

NAY, it shall not be enough, methinks, if only we be but contented and thankful; if not also cheerful in afflictions; if that, as we feel their pain, so we look not to their end; although indeed this is not more requisite, than rarely

found, as being proper only to the good heart. Every bird can sing in a clear heaven, in a temperate spring: that one, as most familiar, so is most commended, that sings merry notes in the midst of a shower, or the dead of winter. Every epicure can enlarge his heart to mirth, in the midst of his cups and dalliance: only the three children can sing in the furnace; Paul and Silas, in the stocks; martyrs, at the stake. It is from heaven, that this joy comes, so contrary to all earthly occasions; bred in the faithful heart, through a serious and feeling respect to the issue of what he feels, the quiet and untroubled fruit of his righteousness; glory, the crown after his fight; after his minute of pain, eternity of joy. He never looked over the threshold of heaven, that cannot more rejoice that he shall be glorious, than mourn in present that he is miserable.

SECTION XV.

Of the Importunity and Terror of Death.

YEA, this consideration is so powerful, that it alone is able to make a part against the fear or sense of the last and greatest of all terribles, death itself: which, in the conscience of his own dreadfulness, justly laughs at all the vain human precepts of tranquillity; appalling the most resolute, and vexing the most cheerful minds. Neither profane Lucretius, with all his epicurean rules of confidence, nor drunken Anacreon, with all his wanton odes, can shift off the importunate and violent horror of this adversary. Seest thou the Chaldean tyrant beset with the sacred bowls of Jerusalem, the late spoils of God's temple; and, in contempt of their owner, carousing healths to his queens, concubines, peers; singing, amidst his cups, triumphant carols of praise to his molten and carved gods? Wouldst thou ever suspect that this high courage could be abated? or, that this sumptuous and presumptuous banquet, after so royal and jocund continuance, should have any other conclusion, but plea-

sure? Stay but one hour longer, and thou shalt see that face, that now shines with a ruddy gloss, according to the colour of his liquor, look pale and ghastly, stamed with the colours of fear and death; and that proud hand, which now lifts up his massy goblets, in defiance of God, tremble like a leaf in a storm; and those strong knees, which never stooped to the burden of their laden body, now not able to bear up themselves, but loosened with a sudden palsy of fear, one knocking against the other: and all this, for that death writes him a letter of summons, to appear that night before him: and, accordingly, ere the next sun, sent two eunuchs, for his honourable conveyance into another world. Where now are those delicate morsels, those deep draughts, those merry ditties, wherewith the palate and ear so pleased themselves? What is now become of all those cheerful looks, loose laughters, stately port, revels, triumphs of the feasting court? Why doth none of his gallant nobles revive the fainted courage of their lord, with a new cup? or, with some stirring jest, shake him out of this unseasonable melancholy? O death, how imperious art thou to carnal minds! aggravating their misery, not only by expectation of future pain, but by the remembrance of the wonted causes of their joy; and not suffering them to see aught, but what may torment them! Even that monster of the Cæsars, that had been so well acquainted with blood, and never had found better sport than in cutting of throats; when now it came to his own turn, how effeminate, how desperately cowardous did he shew himself! to the wonder of all readers, that he, which was ever so valiant in killing, should be so womanishly heartless in dying.

SECTION XVI.

The Grounds of the Fear of Death.

THERE are, that fear not so much to be dead, as to die; the very act of dissolution frightening them with a torment-

The epicure or Sadducee dare not die, for fear of not being: the guilty and loose worldling dares not die, for fear of being miserable: the distrustful and doubting semi-Christian dares not die, because he knows not, whether he shall be, or miserable, or not be at all: the resolved Christian dares, and would die, because he knows he shall be happy; and, looking merrily towards heaven, the place of his rest, can unfeignedly say, "I desire to be dissolved: I see thee, my home, I see thee, a sweet and glorious home after a weary pilgrimage, I see thee: and now, after many lingering hopes, I aspire to thee. How oft have I looked up at thee, with admiration and ravishment of soul; and, by the goodly beams that I have seen, guessed at the glory that is above them! How oft have I scorned these dead and unpleasant pleasures of earth, in comparison of thine? I come now, my joys, I come to possess you: I come, through pain and death; yea, if hell itself were in the way betwixt you and me, I would pass through hell itself to enjoy you."

And, in truth, if that heathen Cleombrotus, a follower of the ancient academy, but upon only reading of his master Plato's* discourses of the Immortality of the Soul, could cast down himself headlong from a high rock, and wilfully break his neck, that he might be possessed of that immortality which he believed to follow upon death; how contented should they be to die, that know they shall be, more than immortal, glorious! He went, not in a hate of the flesh, as the patrician heretics of old,† but in a blind love to his soul, out of bare opinion; we, upon a holy love, grounded upon assured knowledge: he, upon an opinion of future life; we, on knowledge of future glory: he went, unsent for; we, called for by our Maker. Why should his courage exceed ours, since our ground, our estate so far exceeds his?

Even this age, within the reach of our memory, bred that peremptory Italian, which, in imitation of the old Roman courage, lest in that degenerated nation there should be no step left of the qualities of their ancestors, entering upon his torment for killing a tyrant, cheered

* Tul. Tuscul. Callimach. Epigram.

† August. de Hæres.

himself with this confidence; "My death is sharp: my fame shall be everlasting"*—the voice of a Roman, not of a Christian. My fame shall be eternal: an idle comfort! My fame shall live; not my soul live to see it. What shall it avail thee to be talked of, while thou art not? Then fame only is precious, when a man lives to enjoy it. The fame, that survives the soul, is bootless. Yet even this hope cheered him against the violence of his death. What should it do us, that, not our fame, but our life, our glory after death, cannot die? He, that hath Stephen's eyes, to look into heaven, cannot but have the tongue of the saints, "Come, Lord: how long?" That man, seeing the glory of the end, cannot but condemn the hardness of the way. But, who wants those eyes, if he say and swear that he fears not death, believe him not: if he protest his tranquillity, and yet fear death, believe him not; believe him not, if he say he is not miserable.

SECTION XVIII.

The second Rank of the Enemies of Peace.—The first Remedy of an over prosperous Estate: the Vanity and Unprofitableness of Riches; the first Enemy on the right Hand.

THESE are enemies on the left hand. There want not some on the right, which, with less profession of hostility, hurt no less: not so easily perceived, because they dis-temper the mind, not without some kind of pleasure. Surfeit kills more than famine. These are the over-desiring and over-joying of these earthly things. All immoderations are enemies; as to health, so to peace.† He that desires, wants as much as he that hath nothing. The drunken man is as thirsty as the sweating traveller. Hence are the studies, cares, fears, jealousies, hopes, griefs, envies, wishes, platforms of achieving, alterations

* Mors acerba, fama perpetua.

† Hippocr. Aphor.

of purposes, and a thousand like ; whereof each one is enough to make the life troublesome. One is sick of his neighbour's field, whose misshapen angles disfigure his, and hinder his lordship of entireness : what he hath is not regarded, for the want of what he cannot have. Another feeds on crusts, to purchase what he must leave, perhaps, to a fool ; or, which is not much better, to a prodigal heir. Another, in the extremity of covetous folly, chuses to die an unpitied death ; hanging himself for the fall of the market, while the commons laugh at that loss, and in their speeches epitaph upon him, as on that pope, " he lived as a wolf, and died as a dog." One cares not what attendance he dances all hours, on whose stairs he sits, what vices he soothes, what deformities he imitates ; what servile offices he doth ; in a hope to rise. Another stomachs the covered head and stiff knee of his inferior ; angry that other men think him not so good as he thinks himself. Another eats his own heart, with envy at the richer furniture, and better estate, or more honour of his neighbour ; thinking his own not good, because another hath better. Another vexeth himself with a word of disgrace, passed from the mouth of an enemy, which he neither can digest, nor cast up ; resolving, because another will be his enemy, to be his own. These humours are as manifold, as there are men that seem prosperous.

For the avoiding of all which ridiculous and yet spiteful inconveniences, the mind must be settled in a persuasion of the worthlessness of these outward things. Let it know, that these riches have made many prouder, none better : that, as never man was, so never wise man thought himself, better for enjoying them. Would that wise philosopher Socrates have cast his gold into the sea, if he had not known he should live more happily without it ? If he knew not the use of riches, he was no wise man : if he knew not the best way to quietness, he was no philosopher : now, even by the voice of their oracle, he was confessed to be both ; yet cast away his gold that he might be happy.* Would that wise prophet have prayed

* A proof, that, with Christians, deserves no credit ; but, with heathens, commands it.

as well against riches, as poverty? Would so many great men, whereof our little island hath yielded nine crowned kings, while it was held of old by the Saxons, after they had continued their life in the throne, have ended it in the cell, and changed their sceptre for a book; if they could have found as much felicity in the highest estate, as security in the lowest? I hear Peter and John, the eldest and dearest apostles, say, "Gold and silver have I none:" I hear the Devil say, "All these will I give thee; and they are mine, to give;" whether shall I desire to be in the state of these Saints, or that Devil? He was, therefore, a better husband than a philosopher, that first termed riches Goods: and he mended the title well, that, adding a fit epithet, called them Goods of Fortune; false goods ascribed to a false patron. There is no fortune, to give or guide riches: there is no true goodness in riches, to be guided. His meaning then was, as I can interpret it, to teach us in this title, that it is a chance, if ever riches were good to any. In sum, who would account those as riches, or those riches as goods, which hurt the owner; disquiet others; which the worst have; which the best have not; which those that have not, want not; which those want, that have them; which are lost in a night, and a man is not worse when he hath lost them? It is true of them, that we say of fire and water: they are good servants, ill masters. Make them thy slaves, they shall be goods indeed: in use, if not in nature; good to thyself, good to others by thee; but, if they be thy masters, thou hast condemned thyself to thine own galls. If a servant rule, he proves a tyrant. What madness is this! thou hast made thyself, at once a slave and a fool. What if thy chains be of gold? or if, with Heliogabalus, thou hast made thee silken halters? thy servitude may be glorious: it is no less miserable.

SECTION XIX.

The second Enemy on the right Hand, Honour.

HONOUR perhaps is yet better. Such is the confused opinion of those, that know little; but a distinct and curious head shall find it a hard task, to define in what point the goodness thereof consisteth.

Is it in high descent of blood? I would think so, if nature were tied by any law to produce children like qualified to their parents. But, although in the brute creatures she be ever thus regular, that you shall never find a young pigeon hatched in an eagle's nest: neither can I think that true, or if true it was monstrous, that Nicippus's sheep should yeave a lion: yet, in the best creature, which hath his form and her attending qualities from above, with a likeness of face and features, is commonly found an unlikeness of disposition: only the earthly part follows the seed: wisdom, valour, virtue, are of another beginning. Shall I bow to a molten calf, because it was made of golden ear-rings? Shall I condemn all honour of the first head, though upon never so noble deserving, because it can show nothing before itself, but a white shield? If Cæsar or Agathocles, be a potter's son, shall I condemn him? Or if wise Bion be the son of an infamous courtesan, shall the censorious lawyer raze him out of the catalogue, with "*Partus sequitur ventrem*?"* Lastly, shall I account that good, which is incident to the worst? Either, therefore, greatness must shew some charter, wherein it is privileged with succession of virtue: or else the goodness of honour cannot consist in blood.

Is it, then, in the admiration and high opinion, that others have conceived of thee, which draws all dutiful respect, and humble offices from them, to thee? O fickle good, that is ever in the keeping of others, especially of the unstable vulgar, that beast of many heads; whose divided tongues, as they never agree with each other, so seldom agree long with themselves! Do we not see the

* Olympia. Diog. Laert.

superstitious Lystrians, that ere-while would needs make Paul a god, against his will; and, in devout zeal, drew crowned bulls to the altars of their new Jupiter and Mercury;—violence can scarce hold them from sacrificing to him;—now, not many hours after, gather upstones against him; having, in their conceits, turned him, from a god into a malefactor; and are ready to kill him, instead of killing a sacrifice to him? Such is the multitude; and such the steadiness of their honour.

There, then, only is true honour, where blood and virtue meet together: the greatness whereof is from blood; the goodness, from virtue. Rejoice, ye great men, that your blood is ennobled with the virtues and deserts of your ancestors. This only is yours: this only challengeth all unfeigned respect of your inferiors. Count it praiseworthy, not that you have, but that you deserve honour. Blood may be tainted: the opinion of the vulgar cannot be constant: only virtue is ever like itself; and only wins reverence, even of those that hate it: without which, greatness is as a beacon of vice, to draw men's eyes the more to behold it; and those, that see it, dare loath it, though they dare not censure it. So, while the knee bendeth, the mind abhorreth; and telleth the body, it honours an unworthy subject: within itself, secretly, comparing that vicious great man, on whom his submiss courtesy is cast away, to some goodly fair-bound Seneca's Tragedies, that is curiously gilded without; which if a man open, he shall find Thyestes the tomb of his own children; or Oedipus the husband of his own mother; or some such monstrous part, which he, at once, reads and hates.

SECTION XX.

The second Remedy of overjoyed Prosperity; that it exposes to evil.

LET him think, that not only these outward things are not in themselves good, but that they expose their owners to misery: for, besides that God usually punishes our over-

loving them, with their loss, because he thinks them unworthy rivals to himself, who challengeth all height of love, as his only right; so that the way to lose, is to love much; the largeness moreover either of affection or estate, makes an open way to ruin. While a man walks on plain ground, he falls not; or, if he fall, he doth but measure his length on the ground, and rise again without harm: but he, that climbeth high, is in danger of falling; and, if he fall, of killing. All the sails hoisted, give vantage to a tempest; which, through the mariner's foresight giving timely room thereto, by their fall, deliver the vessel from the danger of that gust, whose rage now passeth over, with only beating her with waves for anger that he was prevented. So, the larger our estate is, the fairer mark hath mischief given to hit; and, which is worse, that which makes us so easy to hit, makes our wound more deep and grievous. If poor Cœdus's house burn, he stands by and warms him with the flame, because he knows it is but the loss of an outside; which, by gathering some few sticks, straw, and clay, may with little labour and no cost, be repaired: but, when the many lofts of the rich man do one give fire to another, he cries out one while of his counting-house; another while, of his wardrobe: then, of some noted chest; and, straight, of some rich cabinet: and, lamenting both the frame and the furniture, is therefore impatient, because he had something.

SECTION XXI.

The Vanity of Pleasure, the third Enemy on the right Hand

BUT, if there be any sorceress upon earth, it is pleasure, which so enchanteth the minds of men, and worketh the disturbance of our peace, with such secret delight, that foolish men think this want of tranquillity, happiness. She turneth men into swine, with such sweet charms, that they would not change their brutish nature, for their former reason. "It is a good inquietness," say they, "that

tenteth: it is a good enemy that profiteth." Is it any wonder, that men should be sottish, when their reason is cloyed with sensuality? Thou fool, thy pleasure cloyeth thee; how much? how long? If she have not more befriended thee, than ever she did any earthly favourite; yea, if she have not given thee more, than she hath herself; thy best delight hath had some mixture of discontentment; for, either some circumstance crosseth thy desire, or the inward distaste of thy conscience, checking thine appetite, permits thee not any entire fruition of thy joy. Even the sweetest of all flowers hath its thorns: and who can determine, whether the scent be more delectable, or the pricks more irksome? It is enough for heaven to have absolute pleasures: which if they could be found here below, certainly that heaven, which is now not enough desired, would then be feared. God will have our pleasures here, according to the fashion of ourselves, compounded: so as the best delights may still savour of their earth.

See how that great king, which never had any match for wisdom, scarce ever any superior for wealth, traversed over all this inferior world, with diligent enquiry and observation, and all to find out that goodness of the children of men which they enjoy under the sun; abridging himself of nothing, that either his eyes or his heart could suggest to him; as what is it, that he could not either know or purchase? and now, coming home to himself, after the disquisition of all natural and human things, complains, that "Behold, all is" not only "vanity," but "vexation."

Go, then, thou wise scholar of experience, and make a more accurate search for that, which he sought, and missed. Perhaps, somewhere, betwixt the tallest cedar in Lebanon and the shrubby hyssop upon the wall, pleasure shrouded herself, that she could not be descried of him; whether through ignorance, or negligence: thine insight may be more piercing; thy means more commodious; thy success happier. If it were possible for any man to entertain such hopes, his vain experience could not make him a greater fool: it could but teach him, what he is and knoweth not.

And yet, so imperfect as our pleasures are, they have their satiety: and as their continuance is not good, so

their conclusion is worse : look to their end, and see how sudden, how bitter it is. Their only courtesy is, to salute us with a farewell ; and such a one, as makes their salutation uncomfortable. This Delilah shews and speaks fair ; but, in the end, she will bereave thee of thy strength, of thy sight, yea of thyself. These gnats fly about thine ears, and make thee music awhile ; but evermore they sting, ere they part. Sorrow, and repentance, is the best end of pleasure : pain is yet worse ; but the worst is, despair. If thou miss of the first of these, one of the latter shall find thee ; perhaps, both. How much better is it for thee, to want a little honey, than to be swollen up with a venomous sting !

Thus then the mind resolved, that these earthly things ; honours, wealth, pleasures, are casual, unstable, deceitful, imperfect, dangerous ; must learn to use them without trust, and to want them without grief ; thinking still, “ If I have them, I have some benefit with a great charge : If I have them not ; with little respect of others, I have much security and ease, in myself : ” which once obtained, we cannot fare amiss in either estate ; and, without which, we cannot but miscarry in both.

SECTION XXII.

Positive Rules of our Peace.—The Fruition of God in holy Exercises.

ALL the enemies of our inward peace are thus described and discomfited. Which done, we have enough to preserve us from misery : but, since we moreover seek how to live well and happily, there yet remain those positive rules, whereby our tranquillity may be both had, continued, and confirmed.

Wherein, I fear not, lest I should seem over divine, in casting the anchor of quietness so deep as heaven, the only seat of constancy ; while it can find no hold at all upon earth. All earthly things are full of variableness ; and therefore, having no stay in themselves, can give none

to us. He, that will have and hold right tranquillity, must find in himself a sweet fruition of God, and feeling apprehension of his presence; that, when he finds manifold occasions of vexation in these earthly things, he, overlooking them all and having recourse to his Comforter, may find in him such matter of contentment, that he may pass over all these petty grievances with contempt: which whosoever wants, may be secure, cannot be quiet.

The mind of man cannot but want some refuge; and, as we may say of the elephant, cannot rest, unless it have something to lean upon. The covetous man, whose heaven is his chest, when he hears himself rated and cursed for oppressions, comes home; and, seeing his bags safe, applauds himself against all censures. The glutton, when he loseth friends or good name, yet joyeth in his well furnished table, and the laughter of his wine; more pleasing himself in one dish, than he can be grieved with all the world's miscarriage. The needy scholar, whose wealth lies all in his brain, cheers himself against iniquity of times, with the conceit of his knowledge. These starting holes the mind cannot want, when it is hard driven.

Now, when as, like to some chased Sisera, it shrowds itself under the harbour of these Jaels; although they give it houseroom and milk for a time; yet, at last, either they entertain it with a nail in the temples; or, being guilty to their own impotency, send it out of themselves, for safety and peace. For, if the cross light in that, which it made his refuge; as, if the covetous man be crossed in his riches; what earthly thing can stay him from a desperate phrensy? Or, if the cross fall in a degree above the height of his stay; as, if the rich man be sick or dying; wherein, all wealth is either contemned, or remembered with anguish; how do all his comforts, like vermin from a house on fire, run away from him, and leave him over to his ruin! while the soul, that hath placed his refuge above, is sure that the ground of his comfort cannot be matched with an earthly sorrow, cannot be made variable by the change of any event; but is infinitely above all casualties, and without all uncertainties.

What state is there, wherein this heavenly stay shall not afford me, not only peace, but joy?

Am I in prison? or in the hell of prisons, in some dark, low, and desolate dungeon? Lo, there, Algerius, that sweet martyr, finds more light than above; and pities the darkness of our liberty.* We have but a sun to enlighten our world, which every cloud dimmeth, and hideth from our eyes: but the Father of lights, in respect of whom all the bright stars of heaven are but as the snuff of a dim candle, shines into his pit; and the presence of his glorious angels make that a heaven to him, which the world purposed as a hell of discomfort. What walls can keep out that infinite Spirit, that fills all things? What darkness can be, where the God of this sun dwelleth? What sorrow, where he comforteth?

Am I wandering in banishment? Can I go, whither God is not? What sea can divide betwixt him and me? Then would I fear exile; if I could be driven away, as well from God, as my country. Now, he is as much in all earths. His title is alike to all places; and mine in him. His sun shines to me: his sea, or earth, bears me up: his presence cheereth me, whithersoever I go. He cannot be said to flit, that never changeth his host. He alone is a thousand companions: he alone is a world of friends. That man never knew what it was to be familiar with God, that complains of the want of home, of friends, of companions, while God is with him.

Am I contemned of the world? It is enough for me, that I am honoured of God: of both, I cannot. The world would love me more, if I were less friends with God. It cannot hate me so much as God hates it. What care I to be hated of them, whom God hateth? He is unworthy of God's favour, that cannot think it happiness enough without the world's. How easy is it for such a man, while the world disgraces him, at once to scorn and pity it, that it cannot think nothing more contemptible than itself!

I am impoverished with losses: that was never thoroughly good, that may be lost. My riches will not lose me; yea, though I forego all, to my skin, yet have I not lost any part of my wealth: for, if he be rich, that hath something; how rich is he, that hath the Maker and Owner of all things!

* Pompon. Alger. Fox Martyr.

I am weak and diseased in body : he cannot miscarry, that hath his Maker for his Physician. Yet my soul, the better part, is sound ; for that cannot be weak, whose strength God is. How many are sick in that, and complain not ! I can be content to be let blood in the arm or foot, for the curing of the head or heart. The health of the principal part is more joy to me, than it is trouble to be distempered in the inferior.

Let me know that God favours me, then I have liberty, in prison ; home, in banishment ; honour, in contempt ; in losses, wealth ; health, in infirmity ; life, in death ; and, in all these, happiness.

And, surely, if our perfect fruition of God be our complete heaven ; it must needs be, that our inchoate conversing with him is our heaven imperfectly, and the entrance into the other : which, methinks, differs from this, not in the kind of it, but in the degree.

For the continuation of which happy society, since strangeness looseth acquaintance and breedeth neglect, on our part must be a daily renewing of heavenly familiarity, by seeking him up, even with the contempt of all inferior distraction ; by talking with him, in our secret invocations : by hearing his conference with us ; and by mutual entertainment of each other, in the sweet discourses of our daily meditations. He is a sullen and unsociable friend, that wants words. God shall take no pleasure in us, if we be silent. The heart, that is full of love, cannot but have a busy tongue. All our talk with God, is either suits or thanks : in them, the Christian heart pours out itself to his Maker ; and would not change this privilege for a world. All his annoyances, all his wants, all his dislikes are poured into the bosom of his Invisible Friend ; who likes us still so much more, as we ask more, as we complain more.

Oh, the easy and happy recourse, that the poor soul hath to the high throne of heaven ! We stay not for the holding out of a golden sceptre, to warn our admission ; before which our presence should be presumption and death. No hour is unseasonable, no person too base, no words too homely, no fact too hard, no importunity too great. We speak familiarly ; we are heard, answered, comforted.

Another while, God interchangeably speaks unto us, by the secret voice of his Spirit, or by the audible sound of his word : we hear, adore, answer him ; by both which the mind so communicates itself to God, and hath God so plentifully communicated unto it, that hereby it grows to such a habit of heavenliness, as that now it wants nothing, but dissolution, of full glory.

SECTION XXIII.

The subordinate Rules of Tranquillity. 1. For actions ; to refrain from all Sin, and to perform all Duty.

OUT of this main ground once settled in the heart, like as so many rivers from one common sea, flow those subordinate resolutions, which we require as necessary to our peace ; whether in respect of our actions, or our estate.

For our actions, there must be a secret vow passed in the soul, both of constant refraining from whatsoever may offend that Majesty we rest upon ; and above this, of true and canonical obedience to God, without all care of difficulty, and in spite of all contradictions of nature : not out of the confidence of our own power : impotent men, who are we, that we should either vow or perform ? but, as he said, “ Give, what thou biddest ; and bid, what thou wilt.” Hence, the courage of Moses durst venture his hand, to take up the crawling and hissing serpent. Hence, Peter durst walk upon the pavement of the waves. Hence, that heroical spirit of Luther, a man made of metal fit for so great a work, durst resolve and profess to enter into that fore-warned city, though there had been as many devils in their streets as tiles on their houses.

Both these vows, as we once solemnly made by others ; so, for our peace, we must renew in ourselves. Thus, the experienced mind, both knowing that it hath met with a good friend, and withal what the price of a friend is, cannot but be careful to retain him, and wary of displeasing ; and therefore, to cut off all dangers of variance, voluntarily takes a double oath of allegiance of itself to God :

which, neither benefit shall induce us to break, if we might gain a world; nor fear urge us thereto, though we must lose ourselves.

The wavering heart, that finds continual combats in itself betwixt pleasure and conscience, so equally matched that neither gets the day, is not yet capable of peace; and, whether ever overcometh, is troubled both with resistance and victory. Barren Rebekah found more ease, than when her twins struggled in her womb. If Jacob had been there alone, she had not complained of that painful contention. One while, pleasure holds the fort, and conscience assaults it: which when it hath entered at last by strong hand, after many batteries of judgments denounced; ere long, pleasure either corrupts the watch, or, by some cunning stratagem, finds way to recover her first hold. So, one part is ever attempting, and ever resisting: betwixt both, the heart cannot have peace, because it resolves not: for, while the soul is held in suspense, it cannot enjoy the pleasure it useth; because it is half taken up with fear: only a strong and resolute repulse of pleasure is truly pleasant; for therein the conscience, filling us with heavenly delight, maketh sweet triumphs in itself, as being now the lord of his own dominions, and knowing what to trust to. No man knows the pleasure of this thought, "I have done well," but he that hath felt it: and he, that hath felt it, contemns all pleasure to it. It is a false slander raised on Christianity, that it maketh men dumpish and melancholic: for therefore are we heavy, because we are not enough Christians. We have religion enough, to mislike pleasures; not enough, to overcome them. But, if we be once conquerors over ourselves, and have devoted ourselves wholly to God, there can be nothing but heavenly mirth in the soul. Lo here, ye philosophers, the true music of heaven, which the good heart continually heareth; and answers it, in the just measures of joy. Others may talk of mirth, as a thing they have heard of, or vainly fancied: only the Christian feels it; and, in comparison thereof, scorneth the idle, ribaldish, and scurrilous mirth of the profane.

SECTION XXIV.

2. Rule for our Actions ; to do nothing doubtingly.

AND this resolution, which we call for, must not only exclude manifestly evil actions ; but also doubting and suspension of mind, in actions suspected and questionable : wherein the judgment must ever give confident determination one way. For this tranquillity consisteth in a steadiness of the mind : and how can that vessel, which is beaten upon by contrary waves and winds, and tottereth to either part, be said to keep a steady course ? Resolution is the only mother of security.

For instance : * I see, that usury, which was wont to be condemned for no better than a legal theft, hath now obtained, with many, the reputation of an honest trade ; and is both used by many, and by some defended. It is pity, that a bad practice should find any learned or religious patron. The sum of my patrimony lieth dead by me, sealed up in the bag of my father : my thriftier friends advise me to this easy and sure improvement : their counsel and my gain prevail : my yearly sums come in with no cost but of time, wax, parchment : my estate likes it well ; better than my conscience ; which tells me still, he doubts, my trade is too easy to be honest. Yet I continue my illiberal course, not without some scruple and contradiction : so as my fear of offence hinders the joy of my profit, and the pleasure of my gain heartens me against the fear of injustice. I would be rich with ease : and yet I would

* “ Usury, in the author’s days, denoted any advantage whatever made by lending money. This was condemned by the Canons of the Church, probably in imitation of the Jewish Law, by which all profit made by lending, except to strangers, was forbidden ; (Deut. xxiii. 20.) Since a certain gain has been allowed by law, the word has grown into a bad sense, to denote unlawful gain, or that which exceeds the legal allowance. The prohibition to the Jews was peculiarly adapted, and we may therefore suppose intended, to preserve them a distinct people : but among us, where the borrower makes gain by the money he borrows, it seems most truly equitable that the lender should have a reasonable share in that gain.” PRATT.

not be uncharitable; I would not be unjust. All the while I live in unquiet doubts and distraction: others are not so much entangled in my bonds, as I in my own. At last, that I may be both just and quiet, I conclude to refer this case wholly to the sentence of my inward judge, the conscience: the advocates, gain and justice, plead on either part at this bar, with doubtful success. Gain informs the judge of a new and nice distinction; of toothless, and biting interest: and brings precedents of particular cases of Usury, so far from any breach of charity or justice, that both parts therein confess themselves advantaged. Justice pleads even the most toothless usury to have sharp gums; and finds, in the most harmless and profitable practice of it, an insensible wrong to the common body; besides the infinite wrecks of private estates. The weak judge suspends, in such probable allegations; and demurreth: as being overcome of both, and of neither part: and leaves me yet no whit more quiet; no whit less uncertain. I suspend my practice, accordingly; being sure, it is good not to do, what I am not sure is good to be done: and now gain solicits me as much, as justice did before. Betwixt both, I live troublesomely; nor ever shall do other, till, in a resolute detestation, I have whipped this evil merchant out of the temple of my heart. This rigour is my peace: before, I could not be well, either full or fasting: uncertainty is much pain, even in a more tolerable action.

Neither is it, I think, easy to determine, whether 'it be worse to do a lawful act with doubting, or an evil with resolution: since that, which in itself is good, is made evil to me by my doubt: and what is in nature evil, is in this one point not evil to me, that I do it upon a verdict of a conscience: so now my judgment offends in not following the truth: I offend not, in that I follow my judgment. Wherein, if the most wise God had left us to rove only according to the aim of our own conjectures, it should have been less faulty to be sceptics in our actions, and either not to judge at all, or to judge amiss: but, now that he hath given us a perfect rule of eternal equity and truth, whereby to direct the sentences of our judgment; that uncertainty, which alloweth no peace to us, will afford

us no excuse before the tribunal of heaven: wherefore, then only is the heart quiet, when our actions are grounded upon judgment, and our judgment upon truth.

SECTION XXV.

Rules for Estate. 1. Reliance upon the Providence of God.

For his estate, the quiet mind must first roll itself upon the providence of the Highest: for, whosoever so casts himself upon these outward things, that in their prosperous estate he rejoiceth, and, contrarily, is cast down in their miscarriage; I know not whether he shall find more uncertainty of rest, or more certainty of unquietness: since he must needs be like a light unballasted vessel, that rises and falls with every wave, and depends only on the mercy of wind and water. But, who relies on the inevitable decree and all-seeing providence of God, which can neither be crossed with second thoughts nor with events unlooked for, lays a sure ground of tranquillity. Let the world toss how it list, and vary itself, as it ever doth, in storms and calms; his rest is pitched aloft, above the sphere of changeable mortality.

To begin, is harder than to prosecute: what counsel had God, in the first moulding of thee in the womb of thy mother? What aid shall he have, in repairing thee from the womb of the earth? And, if he could make and shall restore thee without thee, why shall he not much more, without thy endeavour, dispose of thee? Is God wise enough to guide the heavens, and to produce all creatures in their kinds and seasons? and shall he not be able to order thee alone?

Thou sayest, "I have friends; and, which is my best friend, I have wealth, to make both them and me; and wit, to put both to best use." O the broken reeds of human confidence! Who ever trusted on friends, that could trust to himself? Who ever was so wise, as not sometimes to be a fool in his own conceit; oftentimes in the conceit of others? Who was ever more discontent, than the wealthy?

Friends may be false: wealth cannot but be deceitful: wit hath made many fools. Trust thou to that, which, if thou wouldest, cannot fail thee.

Not that thou desirest shall come to pass; but that which God hath decreed. Neither thy fears, nor thy hopes, nor vows shall either foreslow or alter it. The unexperienced passenger, when he sees the vessel go amiss or too far, lays fast hold on the contrary part, or on the mast, for remedy: the pilot laughs at his folly; knowing, that, whatever he labours, the bark will go which way the wind and his stern directeth it. Thy goods are embarked: now thou wishest a direct north-wind, to drive thee to the straits; and then a west, to run in: and now, when thou hast emptied and laded again, thou callest as earnestly for the south and south-east, to return; and lowrest, if all these answer thee not: as if heaven and earth had nothing else to do, but to wait upon thy pleasure: and served only, to be commanded service by thee. Another, that hath contrary occasion, asks for winds quite opposite to thine. He, that sits in heaven, neither fits thy fancy nor his: but bids his winds spit sometimes in thy face; sometimes, to favour thee with a side blast; sometimes, to be boisterous; otherwhile, to be silent, at his own pleasure. Whether the mariner sing or curse, it shall go whither it is sent. Strive or lie still, thy destiny shall run on; and, what must be, shall be. Not that we should hence exclude benefit of means, which are always necessarily included in this wise preordination of all things; but perplexity of cares, and wrestling with Providence. O the idle and ill-spent cares of curious men, that consult with stars and spirits for their destinies, under colour of prevention! If it be not thy destiny; why wouldest thou know it; what needst thou resist it? If it be thy destiny; why wouldst thou know that thou canst not prevent? That, which God hath decreed, is already done in heaven, and must be done on earth. This kind of expectation doth but hasten slow evils, and prolong them in their continuance; hasten them, not in their event, but in our conceit. Shortly then, if thou swimdest against the stream of this Providence, thou canst not escape drowning: every wave turns thee over, like a porpoise before a tempest: but, if thou swimdest

with the stream, do but cast thine arms abroad, thou passest with safety and with ease: it both bears thee up, and carries thee on to the haven, whither God hath determined thine arrival, in peace.

SECTION XXVI.

The second Rule for Estate ; a persuasion of the Goodness and Fitness of it for us.

NEXT to this, the mind of the unquiet man must be so wrought by these former resolutions, that it be thoroughly persuaded, the estate, wherein he is, is best of all ; if not in itself, yet to him : not out of pride, but out of contentment : which whosoever wanteth, cannot but be continually vexed with envy, and racked with ambition. Yea, if it were possible to be in heaven without this, he could not be happy : for it is as impossible, for the mind at once to long after and enjoy, as for a man to feed and sleep at once.

And this is the more to be striven for, because we are all naturally prone to afflict ourselves with our own forwardness : ungratefully contemning all we have, for what we would have. Even the best of the patriarchs could say, " O Lord, what wilt thou give me, since I go childless ? "

The bond-man desires now, nothing but liberty : that alone would make him happy. Once free, forgetting his former thought, he wishes some wealth to make use of his freedom ; and says, " It were as good be straited in place, as in ability. " Once rich, he longeth after nobility ; thinking it no praise to be a wealthy peasant. Once noble, he begins to deem it a base matter to be subject : nothing can now content him but a crown. Then, it is a small matter to rule, so long as he hath but little dominions, and greater neighbours : he would, therefore, be an universal monarch. Whither then ? surely it vexeth him as much, that the earth is so small a globe, so little a molehill ; and that there are no more worlds to conquer. And, now that he hath attained the highest dignity amongst men, he

would needs be a God, conceits his immortality, erects temples to his own name, commands his dead statues to be adored; and, not thus contented, is angry that he cannot command heaven, and control nature.

O vain fools! whither doth our restless ambition climb? What shall be at length the period of our wishes? I could not blame these desires, if contentment consisted in having much: but, now that he only hath much, that hath contentment, and that it is as easily obtained in a low estate, I can account of these thoughts no better than proudly foolish.

Thou art poor: what difference is there betwixt a greater man and thee; save that he doth his businesses by others; thou doest them thyself? He hath caterers, cooks, bailiffs, stewards, secretaries, and all other officers for his several services: thou providest, dressest, gatherest, receivest, expendest, writest for thyself. His patrimony is large: thine earnings small. If Briareus feed fifty bellies with his hundred hands; what is he the better, than he that with two hands feedeth one? He is served in silver: thou in a vessel of the same colour, of lesser price; as good for use, though not for value. His dishes are more dainty; thine as well relished to thee, and no less wholesome. He eats olives, thou garlic: he mislikes not more the smell of thy sauce, than thou dost the taste of his. Thou wantest somewhat, that he hath: he wisheth something, which thou hast, and regardest not. Thou couldst be content to have the rich man's purse; but his gout thou wouldst not have: he would have thy health; but not thy fare.

If we might pick out of all men's estates, that which is laudable, omitting the inconveniences, we would make ourselves complete: but, if we must take altogether, we should perhaps little advantage ourselves with the change: for the most wise God hath so proportioned out every man's condition, that he hath some just cause of sorrow inseparably mixed with other contentments, and hath allotted to no man living an absolute happiness, without some grievances; nor to any man such an exquisite misery, as that he findeth not somewhat wherein to solace himself: the weight whereof varies, according to our

estimation of them. One hath much wealth, but no child to inherit it: he envies at the poor man's fruitfulness, which hath many heirs, and no lands; and could be content, with all his abundance to purchase a successor of his own loins. Another hath many children, little maintenance: he commendeth the careless quietness of the barren; and thinks fewer mouths and more meat would do better. The labouring man hath the blessing of a strong body; fit to digest any fare, to endure any labour; yet he wisheth himself weaker, on condition he might be wealthier. The man of nice education hath a feeble stomach; and, rasping since his last meal, doubts, whether he should eat of his best dish, or nothing: this man repines at nothing more, than to see his hungry ploughman feed on a crust; and wisheth to change estates, on condition he might change bodies with him.

Say, that God should give thee thy wish: what wouldst thou desire: "Let me," thou sayest, "be wise, healthful, rich, honourable, strong, learned, beautiful, immortal." I know thou lovest thyself so well, that thou canst wish all these and more.

But say, that God hath so shared out these gifts, by a most wise and just distribution, that thou canst have but some of these; perhaps, but one; which wouldst thou single out for thyself? Any thing, beside what thou hast: if learned, thou wouldst be strong; if strong, honourable; if honourable, long lived. Some of these thou art already.

Thou fool! cannot God choose better for thee, than thou for thyself? In other matches, thou trustest the choice of a skilfuller chapman: when thou seest a goodly horse in the fair, though his shape please thine eye well, yet thou darest not buy him, if a cunning horse-master shall tell thee he is faulty; and art willing to take a plainer and sounder, on his commendation, against thy fancy. How much more should we, in this case, allow his choice, that cannot deceive us; that cannot be deceived!

But, thou knowest that other thou desirest, to be better than what thou hast: better, perhaps, for him that

hath it; not better for thee.. Liberty is sweet and profitable, to those that can use it; but fetters are better for the frantic man. Wine is good nourishment for the healthful, poison to the aguish. It is good for a sound body to sleep in a whole skin; but he that complains of swelling sores, cannot sleep till it be broken. Hemlock to the goat, and spiders to the monkey, turn to good sustenance; which, to other creatures, are accounted deadly. As in diets, so in estimation of good and evil, of greater and lesser good, there is much variety. All palates commend not one dish; and what one commends for most delicate, another rejects for unsavory. And, if thou know what dish is most pleasant to thee, thy physician knows best which is wholesome. Thou wouldst follow thine appetite too much; and, as the French have in their proverb, wouldst dig thy own grave with thy teeth: thy wise physician oversees and overrules thee. He sees, if thou wert more esteemed, thou wouldst be proud; if more strong, licentious; if richer, covetous; if healthfuller, more secure: but thou thinkest not thus hardly of thyself.

Fond man! what knowest thou future things? believe thou him, that only knows what would be, what will be. Thou wouldst willingly go to heaven: what better guide canst thou have, than him that dwells there? If he lead thee through deep sloughs, and braky thickets; know, that he knows this the nearer way, though more cumbersome. Can there be in him any want of wisdom, not to foresee the best? Can there be any want of power, not to effect the best? any want of love, not to give thee what he knows is best? How canst thou then fail of the best; since, what his power can do, and what his wisdom sees should be done, his love hath done, because all are infinite? He willeth not things, because they are good; but they are good, because he wills them. Yea, if ought had been better, this had not been. God willeth what he doth: and, if thy will accord not with his, whether wilt thou condemn of imperfection?

SECTION XXVII.

The Conclusion of the Whole.

I HAVE chalked out the way of peace: what remaineth, but that we walk along in it? I have conducted my reader to the mine, yea, to the mint of happiness; and shewed him those glorious heaps, which may eternally enrich him. If now he shall go away with his hands and skirt empty, how is he but worthy of a miserable want? Who shall pity us, while we have no mercy on ourselves? Wilful distress hath neither remedy, nor compassion.

And, to speak freely, I have oft wondered at this painful folly of us men, who, in the open view of our peace, as if we were condemned to a necessary and fatal unquietness, live upon our own rack; finding no more joy, than if we were under no other hands but our executioners. One droopeth, under a feigned evil; another augments a small sorrow, through impatience; another draws upon himself an uncertain evil, through fear: one seeks true contentment, but not enough; another has just cause of joy, and perceives it not: one is vexed, for that his grounds of joy are matched with equal grievances; another cannot complain of any present occasion of sorrow, yet lives sullenly, because he finds not any present cause of comfort: one is haunted with his sin; another distracted with his passion: amongst all which, he is a miracle of all men, that lives not some way discontented. So we live not, while we do live; only for that we want, either wisdom or will, to husband our lives to our own best advantage.

Oh, the inequality of our cares! Let riches or honour be in question, we sue to them; we seek for them with importunity, with servile ambition: our pains need no solicitor; yea, there is no way wrong that leads to this end: we abhor the patience to stay till they inquire for us. And, if ever, as it rarely happens, our desert and worthiness win us the favour of this proffer, we meet it with both hands; not daring, with our modest denials, to whet the instance and double the intreaties of so wel-

come suitors. Yet, lo, here the only true and precious riches, the highest advancement of the soul, peace and happiness, seeks for us, sues to us for acceptance: our answers are coy and overly; such as we give to those clients, that look to gain by our favours. If our want were through the scarcity of good, we might yet hope for pity to ease us: but, now that it is through negligence, and that we perish with our hands in our bosom, we are rather worthy of stripes for the wrong we do ourselves, than of pity for what we suffer. That we may and will not, in opportunity of hurting others, is noble and Christian; but, in our own benefit sluggish, and savouring of the worst kind of unthriftiness.

Sayest thou then, this peace is good to have, but hard to get? It were a shameful neglect, that hath no pretence. Is difficulty sufficient excuse to hinder thee from the pursuit of riches, of preferment, of learning, of bodily pleasures? Art thou content to sit shrugging in a base cottage, ragged, famished, because house, clothes, and food will neither be had without money, nor money without labour, nor labour without trouble and painfulness? Who is so merciful, as not to say that a whip is the best alms for so lazy and wilful need? Peace should not be good, if it were not hard. Go, and, by this excuse, shut thyself out of heaven at thy death, and live miserably till thy death; because the good of both worlds is hard to compass. There is nothing but misery on earth, and in hell below, that thou canst come to without labour: and, if we can be content to cast away such immoderate and unseasonable pains upon these earthly trifles, as to wear our bodies with violence, and to encroach upon the night for time to get them; what madness shall it seem in us, not to afford a less labour to that which is infinitely better, and which only gives worth and goodness to the other?

Wherefore, if we have not vowed enmity with ourselves, if we be not in love with misery and vexation, if we be not obstinately careless of our own good; let us shake off this unthrift, dangerous, and desperate negligence; and quicken these dull hearts, to a lively and effectual search of what only can yield them sweet and

abiding contentment : which once attained, how shall we insult over evils, and bid them do their worst ! how shall we, under this calm and quiet day, laugh at the rough weather and unsteady motions of the world ! how shall heaven and earth smile upon us, and we on them : commanding the one, aspiring to the other ! how pleasant shall our life be, while neither joys nor sorrows can dis-temper it with excess ! yea, while the matter of joy, that is within us, turns all the most sad occurrences into pleasure, how dear and welcome shall our death be, that shall but lead us from one heaven to another, from peace to glory !

Go now, ye vain and idle worldlings, and please yourselves in the large extent of your rich manors, or in the homage of those whom baseness of mind hath made slaves to your greatness, or in the price and fashions of your full wardrobe, or in the wanton varieties of your delicate gardens, or in your coffers full of red and white earth ; or, if there be any other earthly thing, more alluring, more precious, enjoy it, possess it, and let it possess you : let me have only my peace ; and let me never want it, till I envy you.

ON THE SIGHT AND FEAR

OF

THE ALMIGHTY.

THE PROEM.

NOTHING is more easy to observe, than that the mind of man, being ever prone to extremities, is no sooner fetched off from superstition, than it is apt to fall upon profaneness; finding no mean, betwixt excess of devotion, and an irreligious neglect. No wise Christian, who has so much as sojourned in the world, can choose but feel, and, with grief of heart, confess this truth. We are ready to think of God's matters, as no better than our own: and a saucy kind of familiarity, this way, hath bred a palpable contempt; so as we walk with the great God of heaven, as with our fellow; and think of his sacred ordinances, as either some common employment or fashionable superfluity. Out of an earnest desire therefore to settle, in myself and others, right thoughts, and meet dispositions of heart, towards the glorious and infinite majesty of our God and his holy services, wherein we are all apt to be too defective; I have put my pen upon this seasonable task: beseeching that almighty God, whose work it is, to bless it, both in my hand, and in the perusal of all readers: whom I beseech to know, that I have written this, not for their eyes, but for their hearts; and therefore charge them, as they tender the good of their own souls, not to rest in the bare speculation, but to work themselves to a serious and sensible practice of these holy prescriptions, ~~as~~ without which, they shall never have either true hold of God, or sound peace and comfort in their own souls. "Come then, ye children, hearken unto me, and I will teach you

the fear of the Lord," Ps. xxxiv. 11. There cannot be a fitter lesson for me, in the improvement of my age, to read; nor, for your spiritual advantage, to take out: one glance of a thought, of this kind, is worth a volume of quarrelsome litigation.

As, above, we shall need no words; when we shall be all spirit, and our language shall be all thoughts: so, below, we cannot but want words, wherein to clothe the true notions of our hearts. I never yet could find a tongue, that yielded any one term, to notify the awful disposition of the heart towards God. We are wont to call it Fear; but this appellation comes far too short: for this signifies an affection; whereas this, which we treat of, is no other than an excellent virtue; yea, a grace rather; yea rather, a precious composition of many divine graces and virtues.

It is no marvel therefore, if the Spirit of God have went, under this one word, to comprehend all that belongs, either to the apprehension or adoration of a God; Gen. xlii. 18. Deut. vi. 13. Ps. xxv. 12. Eccl. xii. 13. Ps. cxxviii. 1. For this alone includes all the humble constitution of a holy soul, and all the answerable demeanour of a mortified creature: neither is there any thing, so well becoming a heart sensible of infiniteness, as this, which we are fain to mis-name FEAR.

To speak properly, there is no fear, but of evil; and that, which we justly call servile: which is a doubtful expectation of something, that may be hurtful to us: and this, when it prevails, is horror and dreadful confusion; an affection, or perturbation rather, fit for the galleys, or hell itself. Love casts it out; as that, which is ever accompanied with a kind of hate: and so will we. We are meditating of such a temper of the heart; as, in the continuance of it, is attended with blessedness; as, in the exercise of it, is fixed upon infinite greatness and infinite goodness; and, in the mean time, is accompanied with unspeakable peace and contentment in the soul; Ps. ciii. 17. cxxviii. 4. cxlvii. 11. Eccl. viii. 11.

And yet, whoso had a desire to retain the word, if our ethic doctors would give him leave, might say, that affections, well employed upon excellent objects, turn virtues. So love, though commonly marshalled in those lower ranks of the soul; yet, when it is elevated to the all-glorious God, is justly styled the highest of theological virtues: yea, when it rises but to the level of our brethren, it is Christian charity. So, grief for sin, is holy penitence. And what more heavenly grace can be incident into the soul, than joy in the Holy Ghost? Neither is it otherwise with fear: when it is taken up with worldly occurrences of pain, loss, shame, it is no better than a troublesome passion; but, when we speak of the fear of God, the case and style is so altered, that the breast of a Christian is not capable of a more divine grace.

But, not to dwell on syllables, nor to examine curious points of morality, that, which we speak of, is no other, than a reverential awe of the holy and infinite majesty of God, constantly and unremovably settled in the soul: a disposition so requisite, that he, who hath it, cannot but be a saint; and he, that hath it not, is, in a sort, without God in the world.

I. To the PRODUCING whereof, there is need of a double apprehension: the one, of an incomprehensible excellence, and inseparable presence of God; the other, of a most miserable vileness, and, as it were, nothingness of ourselves. The former is that which the Spirit of God calls the Sight of the Invisible: for sight is a sense of the quickest and surest perception; so as, in seeing of God, we apprehend him infinitely glorious in all that he is, in all that he hath, in all that he doth; and intimately present to us, with us, in us.

1. Let us then, first, see *what that sight is*. Wherein we cannot have a more meet pattern than Moses: that exposed infant, who, in his cradle of bulrushes, was drawn out of the flags of Nilus, is a true emblem of a regenerate soul, taken up out of the misery of a dangerous world, in whose waves he is naturally sinking. He, that was saved from the waters, saw God in fire; and, in a holy curiosity, hasted to see the bush, that burned, and consumed not: let our godly zeal carry us as fast, to see what he saw;

and make us eagerly ambitious of his eyes, of his art. Surely Moses, as St. Stephen tells, was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians : he was not a greater courtier, than a scholar : but, Moses's optics were more worth, than all the rest of his skill. All Egypt, and Chaldea to boot, though they were famous of old for mathematic science, could not teach him this art of seeing the Invisible. As only the sun gives us light, to see itself ; so only the Invisible God gives a man power, to see himself that is invisible. There is a threefold world objected to human apprehension ; a sensible world, an intelligible, a spiritual or divine : and, accordingly, man has three sorts of eyes, exercised about them ; the eye of sense, for this outward and material world ; of reason, for the intelligible ; of faith, for the spiritual. Moses had all these : by the eye of sense, he saw Pharaoh's court and Israel's servitude ; by the eye of reason, he saw the mysteries of Egyptian learning ; by the eye of faith, he saw him that is invisible. In the eye of sense, even brute creatures partake with him : in the eye of reason, men ; in the faculty of discerning spiritual and divine things, only saints and angels. Doubtless, Moses was herein privileged above other men.

Two ways, therefore, did he see the Invisible : first, by viewing the visible signs and sensible representations of God's presence ; as in the bush of Horeb, the hill of visions ; in the fire and cloud, in the mount of Sinai : secondly, by his own spiritual apprehension. That first was proper to Moses, as an eminent favourite of God : this other must be common to us, with him. That we may then attain to the true fear and fruition of God, we must see him that is invisible ; as travellers, here ; as comprehensors, hereafter. How we shall see him, in his and our glorious home, we cannot yet hope to comprehend : when we come there to see him, we shall see and know, how and how much we see him ; and, not till then. In the mean time, it must be our main care, to bless our eyes with Moses's object ; and, even upon earth, to aspire to the sight of the Invisible.

This is an act, wherein indeed our chief felicity consists. It is a curiously witty disquisition of the schools, since all beatitude consists in the fruition of God, whether we more essentially, primarily, and directly enjoy God in the act of

understanding, which is by seeing him ; than in the act of will, which is by loving him : and the greatest masters, for ought I see, pitch upon the understanding in the full sight of God ; as whose act is more noble and absolute, and the union wrought by it more perfect. If any man desire to spend thoughts on this divine curiosity, I refer him to the ten reasons, which that doctor Solennis gives and rests in, for the decision of this point. Surely, these two go so close together, in the separated soul, that it is hard, even in thought, to distinguish them. If I may not rather say, that, as there is no imaginable composition in that spiritual essence ; so, its fruition of God is made up of one simple act alone, which here results out of two distinct faculties. It is enough for us to know, that if all perfection of happiness and full union with God consists in the seeing of him, in his glory ; then it is and must be our begun happiness, to see him, as we may, here below. He can never be other than he is : our apprehension of him varies. Here, we can only see him darkly, as in a glass : there, clearly, and, as he is.

Even here below, there are degrees ; as of bodily, so of spiritual sight. The newly-recovered blind man saw men, like trees : the eyes of true sense see men, like men. The illuminated eyes of Elisha and his servant saw angels environing them : St. Stephen's eyes saw heaven opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God ; Acts vii. 56. The clear eyes of Moses see the God of angels : St. Paul's eyes saw the unutterable glories of the third heaven. Still, the better eyes the brighter vision.

But what a contradiction is here in seeing the Invisible ! If invisible, how seen ? and if seen, how invisible ? Surely, God is a most purely and simply spiritual essence. Here is no place for that, not so much heresy, as stupid conceit, of anthropomorphism. A bodily eye can only see bodies, like itself : the eye must answer the object : a spiritual object, therefore, as God is, must be seen by a spiritual eye. Moses's soul was a spirit ; and that saw the God of spirits : so he, that is in himself invisible, was seen by an invisible eye ; and so must be. If we have no eyes, but those that are seen ; we are as very beasts, as those that we see : but, if we have invisible and spiritual eyes,

we must improve them, to the sight of him that is invisible.

Let us then, to the unspeakable comfort of our souls, enquire and learn, how we may here upon earth, see the invisible God.

(1.) And, surely, as it was wisely said of him of old, that it is more easy to know what God is not, than what he is; so it may be justly said also, of the vision of God, it is more obvious to say *how God is not seen*, than how he is. Let us, if you please, begin with the negative.

[1.] We may not, therefore, think to see God, by any fancied representation. He will admit of no image of himself; no, not in thought. All possibly conceivable ideas and similitudes, as they are infinitely too low; so they are clean contrary to his spiritual nature, and his express charge: and the very entertainment of any of them is no other than a mental idolatry. In the very holy of holies, where he would most manifest his presence, there was nothing to be seen, but a cloud of smoke; as the poet,* scoffingly; and, as that great king† professed to see there: to teach his people, that he would not be conceived any way, but in an absolute immunity from all forms.

[2.] Secondly, we may not hope to see God, by the working of our improved reason: for, as intelligible things are above the apprehension of sense; so divine matters are no less above the capacity of understanding. Justly is Durand exploded here; who held, that a created understanding was, of itself, sufficient for the vision of God, without supernatural aid; for, whatever our soul understands here, it doth it by the way of those phantasms which are represented unto it; by which it is not possible, there should be any comprehension of this infinite essence. Every power works within the compass of its own sphere; even from the lowest of sense, to the highest of faith. If the eye should encroach upon the ear, in affecting to discern the delicate air of pleasant sounds; and the ear should usurp upon the eye, in professing to judge of a curious picture or pleasant prospect; it were an absurd ambition of both. It is all one, for a beast to take upon him to judge of

* Nil præter nubes. Juv.

† Alex. Mag.

matter of discourse; and for a philosopher to determine of matters of faith. Reason was not given to man for nought: even that can impart unto us something concerning God; but, not enough. I remember Gerson,* a great master of contemplation, professes that he knew one, (which is, in St. Paul's phrase, himself) who, after many temptations of doubt, concerning a main article of faith, was suddenly brought into so clear a light of truth and certitude; that there remained no relics at all of dubitation; nothing but confidence and serenity: which, saith he, was wrought by a hearty humiliation, and captivation of the understanding to the obedience of faith: neither could any reason be given of that quiet, and firm peace in believing, but his own feeling and experience. And, surely, so it is, in this great business of seeing God: the less we search, and the more we believe, the clearer vision do we attain of him that is invisible.

[3.] Neither, thirdly, may we hope here to aspire to a perfect sight, or a full comprehension of this blessed object. The best of all earthly eyes doth but look through a scarf, at this glorious sight; and complains of its own weakness and obscurity: and what hope can we have, to compass this infinite prospect? The clearest eye cannot, at once, see any round body, if it be but of a small bullet or ring: and, when we say we see a man, we mean, that we see but his outside; for, surely, his heart, or lungs, or brain, are out of our sight: much less can we see his soul, by which he is. What speak I of the poor narrow conceit of us mortals? I need not fear to say, that the glorified saints and glorious angels of heaven, being but of a finite though spiritual nature, hold it no disparagement, to disclaim the capacity of this infinite object; much less may we think to drain this ocean with our egg-shell.

[4.] Lastly, we may not make account here, to see the face of God in his divine essence, or in the height of the resplendence of his glory. This, even Moses himself did not: he desired it indeed, but it might not be yielded: Exodus xxxiii. 18, 20: and God tells him, this was no

* Jo. Gerson de Distinctione Verarum Visionum à Falsis.

object for mortal eyes. A man must die to see it ; as Austin well remarks. Indeed, it is said, Moses spake to God, face to face ; the word in the original is, פָּנַי לִפְנֵי, “ faces to faces :” but ye never read, that he *saw* God face to face : he still conferred with that oracle, which was ever invisible. It is a poor conceit of Cornélius à Lapide, that Moses longed so much to see the face of God in some assumed form ; for then that face should not have been his : and, if God should have been pleased to assume such a form, it had been no less easy for him, to have made the face aspectable, as the back. In this sense, old Jacob calls his altar Penu-el, *the face of God*, and professes to have seen God, face to face ; Gen. xxxii. 30 : his face saw that face, which God had, for the present, assumed, without a present death.

Doubtless, Moses, having seen divers veils of God’s presence, that is, sensible testimonies of his being there, desires now to see that glorious Majesty of God open-faced ; without those masks of outward representation. So he interprets himself, while he expresses פָּנֶיךָ “ thy face,” by כְּבוֹדֶךָ “ thy glory :” Exod. xxxiii. 18. The desire was zealously ambitious : too high, even for him that had been twice blessed with forty days’ conference with the God whom he longed to see. Much less may we think of aspiring to this sight ; who must know our distance, even from the foot of the mount. It is abundantly enough for us, if, out of some small loop hole of the rock, we may be allowed, in his passage, to see some after glimpses of that incomprehensible majesty : to see him, both as we can be capable, and as he will be visible ; that is, as he hath revealed himself to us in his word, in his works, in his wonderful attributes : in his word, as a most glorious spiritual substance, in three equally glorious subsistencies : in his works, as the most mighty Creator, and munificent Preserver ; as the most merciful Redeemer of the world ; as the most gracious Comforter and Sanctifier of the world of his elect : in his attributes, as the God of spirits ; whose infinite power, wisdom, mercy, justice, truth, goodness, is essential ; so as he is all these abstractedly, uncompoundedly, really, infinitely.

Shortly, therefore, we may not look here to him by the eye of fancy, or by the eye of reason, or in a full view, or in the height of his glory.

(2.) Let us then, in the next place, see how we may and must see him.

Would we therefore see him that is invisible ?

[1.] In the first place, we must have our eyes cleared from the natural indisposition to which they are subject.

We have all, in nature, many both inward and ambient hinderances of the sight. There is a kind of earthliness in the best eye whereby it is gouled up; that it cannot so much as open itself, to see spiritual things: these are our carnal affections. There is a dimness and duskiness in the body of the eye, when it is opened; which is our natural ignorance of heavenly things. There is, besides these, a film, which is apt to grow over our eye, of natural infidelity; which makes it incapable of this divine vision. And, after all these, when it is at the clearest, the moats and dust of worldly thoughts, are apt to trouble our sight. Lastly, every known sin, wherein a man willingly continues, is a beam in the eye, that bars all sight of God. "In malevolam animam," &c. "Wisdom enters not into an ill-doing soul:" and "Malitia occæcat intellectum;" Wickedness blinds the understanding: as the wise man of old.

There must be a removal and remedy of all these, ere we can attain to a comfortable vision of the Invisible. The goule of our eyes must be washed off: and, if we cannot, by our utmost endeavours, lift up our eye-lids, as we ought, we must sue to him that can do it, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may see the wonderful things of thy law." The dimness and duskiness of our eyes must be cleared, by that *eye-salve* of the Spirit; Rev. iii. 18. The film of our infidelity must be scoured off by the cleansing waters of Siloam; the fountain of divine truth, welling out of the holy scriptures. The moats and dust of worldly cares must be wiped out, by a contemptuous and holy resolution. The beam of sin, lastly, must be pulled out by a serious repentance.

So then, if there be any of us that makes account to see God, while he is taken up with sensual affections, while he is blinded with his natural ignorance and infidelity,

while he is seized upon by worldly cares and distractions, while he harbours any known sin in his bosom, he doth but deceive his own soul. Away with all these impediments, that we may be capable of the vision of God.

[2.] In the second place, we must set this blessed object before our eyes; resolving of the certainty of his presence with us. Or, rather, we must set ourselves before him, who is ever unremovably before us, with us, in us: acknowledging him, with no less assurance of our faith; than we acknowledge the presence of our own bodies, by the assurance of sense. For, how shall we suppose we can see him that is absent from us? No man will say, he sees the sun, when it is out of our hemisphere.

That infinite God therefore, who cannot but be every where, must be acknowledged to be ever, in a glorious manner, present with us: manifesting his presence most eminently, in the high heavens; and yet, filling both heaven and earth with the majesty of his glory. In him it is, that "we live, and move, and have our being." He comprehends the whole world: himself only being incomprehensible: secluded from no place, included in no place: nearer to us than our own souls; when we die, we part from them; from him we cannot part, with whom remoteness of place can make no difference, time no change.

When the heart is thus thoroughly assured, it is in a fair way to see the Invisible: for now, after all the former impediments, the hinderance of distance is taken away; and nothing remaineth, but that the eye be so affected and employed hereabouts, as it ought.

[3.] To which purpose, in the third place, there must be an exaltation and a fortification of our sight: an exaltation, raising it above our wonted pitch; for our heart is so inured and confined to bodily objects, that, except it be somewhat raised above itself, it is not capable of spiritual things: a fortification of our sight, so raised; for our visive beams are, at our best, so weak that they are not able to look upon a sight so spiritually glorious. Alas, we cannot so much as look upon the sun-beams, but we are dazzled and blinded with that which gives us opportunity of sight: how shall we be able to behold the infinite resplendence of him that made it?

St. Stephen was a true eagle. The blessed protomartyr's cleared, exalted, fortified sight pierced the heavens; and saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. Whence was this vigour, and perspicacity? He was "full of the Holy Ghost." That Spirit of God, which was within him, gave both clearness and strength, in such miraculous manner, to the eyes of him, who should straightway see, as he was seen; who should instantly, by the eye of his glorified soul, no less see the incomprehensible majesty of God the Father, than now, by his bodily eye, he saw the glorified body of the Son of God. It must be the only work of the same Spirit of God within us, that must enable us, both to the faculty and exercise of seeing the Invisible.

[4.] For the performance whereof, there must be, in the fourth place, a trajection of the visual beams of the soul, through all earthly occurrences, terminating them only in God: as now, we look through the air, at any object: but our sight passes through it, and rests not in it. While we are here, we cannot but see the world: even the holiest eye cannot look off it; but it is to us, as the vast air is betwixt us and the starry heaven, only for passage. All is translucid, till the sight arrive there. There it meets with that solid object of perfect contentment and happiness, wherewith it is thoroughly bounded.

[5.] When it hath therefore attained thither, there must be, in the fifth place, a certain divine irradiation of the mind, which is now filled and taken up with a lightsome apprehension of an infinite majesty, of a glory incomprehensible and boundless; attended and adored by millions of heavenly angels and glorified spirits. Whereto way must be made, by the conceit of a transcendent light; wherein God dwelleth; as far above this outward light which we see, as that is above darkness: for, though we may not in our thoughts liken God to any created brightness, be it never so glorious; yet nothing forbids us to think of the place of his eternal habitation, as infinitely resplendent, above the comparison of those beams which any creature can cast forth. "He is clothed," saith the psalmist, "with light, as with a garment." Lo, when we cannot see a man's soul, yet we may see his body; and,

when we cannot see the body, yet we may see the clothes : even so, though we may not think to see the essence of God, yet we may see and conceive of this his resplendent garment of light.

Far be it therefore from us, when we would look up to a Deity, to have our eye-sight terminated in a gloomy opacity and sad darkness, which hath no affinity with any appendance of that divine majesty, who hath thought good to describe itself by light. Let our hearts adore such an infinite Spirit, as that the light, wherein he dwells, is inaccessible ; the light, which he hath, and is, is inconceivable ; and rather rest themselves, in an humble and devout adoration of what they cannot know ; than weary themselves, with a curious search of what they cannot comprehend. A simple and meek kind of astonishment and admiration, beseems us here better than a bold and busy disquisition. But, if this outward light, which of all visible creatures comes nearest the nature of a spirit, shall seem too material to express the glory of that blessed habitation of the Highest ; let the mind labour to apprehend an intellectual light, which may be so to our understanding, as this bodily light is to our sense, purely spiritual and transcendently glorious ; and let it desire to wonder at that which it can never conceive. How should this light be inaccessible, if it were such, as either our sense or reason could attain unto ?

[6.] When we have attained to this comfortable and heavenly illumination, there must be, in the sixth place, a fixing of the eye upon this beatifical object ; so as it may be free from distraction and wandering. Certainly, there is nothing more apt to be miscarried, than the eye : every new sight wins it away from that which last allured it. It is not hard nor unusual to have some sudden short glimpses of this happy vision, which yet the next toy fetches off, and makes us to forget ; like as the last wave washeth off the impression of the former. What are we the better for this, than that patient, who, having the film too early raised from his eye, sees the light for the present, but shall never see any more ? Would we see God to purpose ? when we have once set eye upon him, we may not suffer ourselves, by any means, to lose the

sight of him again ; but must follow it still, with a constant and eager intention : like as the disciples of Christ, when they had fixed their eyes upon their ascending Saviour, could not be taken off with the presence of angels ; but sent their eye beams after him into heaven, so earnestly, that the reproof of those glorious spirits could hardly pull them off.

You are now ready to tell me, this is a fit task for us, when we are in our heaven ; and to plead the difficulty of such our settlement, in this region of change, where our eyes cannot but be forced aside, with the necessity of our worldly occasions : and to question the possibility of viewing two objects at once,—God, and the world : not considering, that herein lies the improvement of the Christian's skill, in these divine optics. The carnal eye looks through God, at the world : the spiritual eye looks through the world, at God : the one of those he seeth mediately ; the other, terminatively : neither is it, in nature, hard to conceive, how we may see two such objects, as whereof one is in the way to the other ; as through a prospective glass, we can see a remote mark ; or, through a thin cloud, we can see heaven. Those glorious angels of heaven are never without the vision of God ; yet, being ministering spirits for the good of his elect here below, they must needs take notice of these earthly occurrences : the variety of these sublunary objects cannot divert their thoughts from their Maker. Although also, to speak distinctly, the eye, thus employed, is not the same : nothing hinders, but that, while the bodily sees a body, the spiritual eye may see a spirit : as, when a loadstone is presented to my view, the eye of my sense sees the body and fashion of the stone, my eye of reason sees the hidden virtue which is in it. Both these kinds of eyes may be thus fixed upon their several objects, without any intersection of the visual lines of each other.

But, that no man may think God hath so little respect to our infirmities, as to impose upon us impossible tasks, we must know, that, since the soul of man, in this state of frail mortality, is not capable of a perpetual act of such an intuition of God, here is necessary use of a just distinction.

As the school is wont to distinguish of intentions; so must we here, of the apprehension of God: which is either actual, or habitual, or virtual: actual, when our cogitations are taken up and directly employed in the meet consideration of the Blessed Deity, and the things thereto appertaining: habitual, when we have a settled kind of holy disposition, and aptitude inclining us ever to these divine thoughts; ready still to bring them forth into act, upon every least motion: virtual, betwixt both these, being neither so quick and agile, as the actual; nor yet so dull and flagging as the habitual, which may be incident to a man whether sleeping or otherwise busied: when, by the power of a heavenly disposition wrought in the mind, we are so affected, as that divine thoughts are become the constant, though insensible, guests of the soul; while the virtue of that original illumination sticks still by us, and is, in a sort, derived into all our subsequent cogitations; leaving in them perpetual remainders of the holy effects of the deeply wrought and well-grounded apprehension of God: as, in a pilgrim towards the holy land, there are not always actual thoughts concerning his way or end; yet there is still a habitual resolution, to begin and compass that journey; and a secret power of his continued will, to put forward his steps to that purpose; there being a certain impression remaining in the motive faculty, which still insensibly stirs him towards the place desired; neither is it unusual, even in nature, to see many effects continuing, when the motion of the cause, by which they were wrought, ceaseth; as when some deep bell is wrung to the height, the noise continues some time in the air, after the clapper is silent; or, when a stone is cast into the water, the circles that are caused by it are enlarged and multiplied, after the stone lies still in the bottom.

However, therefore, we cannot hope in this life, through our manifold weaknesses and distractions, to attain unto the steady continuance of the actual view of him that is invisible; yet, to the habitual and virtual power of apprehending him, we may, through the goodness of him whom we strive to see, happily aspire.

Neither may we be wanting to ourselves, in taking all

occasions of renewing these our actual visions of God; both set, and casual. There is nothing, that we can see, which does not put us in mind of God: what creature is there, wherein we do not espy some footsteps of a Deity? every herb, flower, leaf, in our garden; every bird and fly, in the air; every ant and worm, in the ground; every spider, in our window; speaks the omnipotence and infinite wisdom of their Creator. None of these may pass us, without some fruitful monition of acknowledging a divine hand. But, besides these, it will be requisite for us, every morning, to season our thoughts with a serious renovation of our awful apprehensions of God; and not to take off our hand, till we have wrought our hearts to some good competency of right and holy conceits of that glorious majesty: the efficacy whereof may dilate itself to the whole following day; which may be often revived by our frequent ejaculations. But, above all other, when we have to do with God, in the set immediate exercises of his services and our heavenly devotions, we must endeavour, to our utmost, to sharpen our eyes to a spiritual perspicacity; striving to see him, whom we speak unto, and who speaks unto us, as he hath pleased to reveal himself. But, over and beside all these, even when we have no provocations from any particular occasion, it must be our continual care to labour with our God, that it would please him to work us to such a holy and heavenly disposition, as that, whatever our employments may be, we may never want the comfort of a virtual and habitual enjoying the sight of God; so as the power and efficacy of our first well-taken apprehension may run on, through all the following actions and events, both of our life and death.

[7.] Upon this constant fixedness of our thoughts on God, there cannot but follow, in the seventh place, a marvellous delight and complacency of the soul, in so blessed an object. Neither is it easy to determine, whether of these do more justly challenge a precedence in the heart: whether the eye be so fixed, because it is well pleased with the sight; or, whether it be so pleased and ravished, with that happy sight, because it is so fixed. Whatsoever these two are, in the order of nature, I am

sure, in time, they are inseparable: neither is it possible for any man to see God as interested in him, and not to love him, and take pleasure in him. As a stranger, as an enemy, or avenger, even devils and reprobate souls behold him, to their regret and torment; if I may not say, they rather see his anger and judgment, than himself: but never eye can see him as his God and not be taken with infinite delight: for that absolute goodness, out of which no man can contemplate God, can be no other than infinitely amiable. And if, in the seeing of God, we be, as the School hath taught us to speak, unitively carried into him, how can we choose but in this act, be affected with joy unspeakable and glorious? "In thy presence," saith the psalmist, "is the fulness of joy: and, at thy right-hand, are pleasures for evermore."

In sum, therefore; if, when our eyes, being freed from all natural indispositions and both inward and outward impediments, we have so this blessed object presented before us, as that, there is an exaltation and fortification of our sight; and, thereupon, a trajection of the visual beams through all earthly occurrences; and a divine irradiation of the understanding; and a steadfast fixing of the eye upon this happy object, without wandering and distraction; not without a wonderful delight and joy in the God of all comfort, whom we apprehend; we do now effectually borrow Moses's eyes, and, as he did, see the Invisible.

(3.) But, as all good things are difficult, and all difficulties full of discouragement unless they be matched with a countervailable benefit, in which cases they do rather whet than turn the edge of our desires; let us see, what considerations of profit, arising from this noble act, may stir up our languishing hearts to the endeavour and performance thereof.

There are actions, which, carrying nothing but danger and trouble in the mouth of them, had need to be drawn on with the promise of an external reward. There are those, which carry in them their own recompence: such is this we have in hand. What can there be out of itself so good as it? When we take pains to put ourselves into some theatre or court, or some pompous triumph, we have

no other end, but to see; and yet, how poor and unsatisfying is that spectacle; and such, as wherein our frivolous curiosity shuts up in emptiness and discontentment! How justly then are we ambitious of this prospect, wherein, to but see, is to be blessed! It is no news, to see wantons transported from themselves, with the sight of a beautiful face; though such, perhaps, as wherein they can never hope to have any interest: and some curious eyes, no less taken with an exquisite picture; which yet shall never be theirs: how can we be other than ravished with a heavenly delight and pleasure, in so seeing the infinite beauty of the God of spirits, as that our sight cannot be severed from fruition? The act itself is an abundant remuneration; yet doth it not want many sweet and beneficial consequences, which do justly quicken our desires to attain unto the practice of it.

[1.] Whereof it is not the meanest, that whoever hath happily aspired thereunto, cannot be carried away with earthly vanities. What poor things are these, in comparison of those invisible glories! Alas, what was the pleasure, and riches, of the court of Egypt, in the eyes of Moses, when he had once seen his God? It is a true word, that of the chancellor of Paris, "When a man hath tasted once of the spirit, all flesh is savourless." Surely, when once the chosen vessel had been rapt into the third heaven, and seen those unutterable magnificencies of the divine majesty, who can wonder, if he looked, ever after, with scorn and pity upon all the glittering poverty of this inferior world? Go then, ye poorly-great ones of the world, and admire the piles of your treasures, the stateliness of your structures, the sound of your titles, the extent of your territories: but know, that he, who hath seen the least glimpse of the Invisible, knows how to commiserate your felicity; and wonders what ye can see in all these, worth your admiration and pursuit. What joy and triumph was among the Jews, when they saw the foundation of the second temple laid! yet those ancient priests and levites, whose eyes had seen the glory of the former temple, wept, and cried as loud as the rest shouted. Those, that know no better, may rejoice and exult in these worldly contentments; but those who have had

but a blink of the beauty of heaven, can look upon them no otherwise than with an overly contemptuousness. I wonder not, if good old Simeon were content to have his eyes closed for ever, when he had once seen the Son of God : whatever he should see afterwards, would but abase those eyes, that had been blessed with the face of his Saviour. It was no ill conceit of the wise orator, that he, who had once known and considered the magnitude of the world, could never after admire any thing : surely, we may more justly say, that he, who hath duly taken into his thoughts the consideration of the infinite power, wisdom, goodness, of the great God of the world, cannot think the world itself worthy of his wonder. As some great peer therefore, that hath been used to stately shews and courtly magnificence, doth not vouchsafe so much as to cast his eye towards the mean worthless gewgaws of a pedlar's stall, which yet silly children behold with great pleasure and admiration ; so the soul, that hath been inured to the sight of the divine majesty, scorns to suffer itself to be transported with the trash and toys of this vain and transitory world.

[2.] No whit inferior to this benefit is the second ; that this sight of the Invisible is a notable and prevalent means to restrain us from sinning : for, how dares he sin, that sees God ever before him ? whom he knows of so pure eyes, that he detests the least motion to evil ; of so almighty power, as to revenge it everlastingly ? It was a poor thought of him, who yet could know no better, that he, who would dissuade himself from a secret wickedness, should suppose a grave Cato, or some other such austere frowning censor, to be by him, looking upon his actions : as if the shame or fear of such a witness were a sufficient coercion from evil. He that hath no eyes to see a God, may scare himself with the imagined sight of a man somewhat better than himself : but he, who hath the grace to see the Invisible, finds a stronger restraint in that presence, than if he were looked on by millions of witnesses, judges, executioners. Yet, as this sight is mutual, (ours of God, and God's of us,) the good heart finds a more powerful restriction in his seeing of God, than in God's seeing of him : if there be more fear in this, there is more

love in the other ; for, since this holy vision of God is ever joined with some warmth of good affection to that prime and infinite goodness, the very apprehension of that unspeakable loveliness, which is in him, more effectually curbeth all evil desires in us, than the expectation of any danger that can threaten us. “How can I do this great evil, and sin against God?” saith good Joseph, Gen. xxxix. 9. The sin affrights him more than the suffering; and the offence of a God, more than his own danger.

[3.] The Spirit of God hath thought fit to specify the third benefit, upon occasion of the mention of Moses's vision of God : “He endured, as seeing him who is invisible.” As this sight, therefore, hath power to withhold us from doing evil ; so also, to uphold us in the suffering of evil. What, but cheerfulness and ease, could holy Stephen find, in the stones of his enraged murderers ; when, through that hail-storm, he could see his Jesus, standing at the right-hand of God, ready to revenge and crown him ? What a pleasing walk did the three children find, in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace ; while the Son of God made up the fourth ! What bath was so suppling and delightful as the rack of Theodorus the martyr ; while God's angel wiped and refreshed his distended joints ? With what confidence and resolution did the father of the faithful break through all troubles and temptations, when he heard God say, “Fear not, Abraham ; I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward !” Gen. xv. 1. Certainly, all fear and discouragement, arises from a conceit of our own weakness, and an adversary's power and advantage : take away these two, and the mind of man remains undaunted. And both these vanish at the sight of the Invisible ; for, what weakness can we apprehend, when God is our strength ; or what adversary can we fear, when the Almighty is with us ? Good Hezekiah was never so much seared, with all the bravings of Rabshakeh, as when he said, “Am I come up hither without the Lord ?” Had God taken part against his degenerated people, what could the arm of flesh have availed, for their defence ? as, contrarily, when he strikes in, what can the gates of hell do ? Is it multitude that can give us courage ? Hear Elisha to his servant ; “There are more with us, than against

us." Is it strength? Behold, "the weakness of God is stronger than men," than devils. How justly do we condemn all visible powers, when we see the Invisible! when we see him, not empty handed; but standing ready, with a crown of glory, to reward our conquest; "To him that overcomes, it shall be given." Are we therefore persecuted for professing the truth of the Gospel; and cast into a dark and desolate dungeon, where no glimmering of light is allowed to look in upon us; where we are so far from being suffered to see our friends, that we cannot see so much as the face of our keeper? Lo, even there, and thence, we may yet see the Invisible; and, in spite of malice, in his light we can see light. Do we lie groaning upon the painful bed of our sickness, closing our curtains about us to keep out the light, which now grows offensive to our sight? yea, doth death begin to seize upon our eyes; and to dim and thicken our sight, so as now we cannot discern our dearest friends, that stand ready to close them for us? yet, even then, may we most clearly see the Invisible: and that sight is able to cheer us up, against all the pangs and terrors of death; and to make us triumph, even in dying.

[4.] Lastly, what other doth this vision of God, but enter us into our heaven? "Blessed are the pure in heart," saith our Saviour upon the mount; "for they shall see God." Lo, he, that only can give blessedness, hath promised it to the pure; and he, that best knows wherein blessedness consists, tells us, it is in the seeing of God. The blessed spirits above, both angels and souls of the departed saints, see him clearly, without any veil drawn over their glorified eyes: we, wretched pilgrims here on earth, must see him as we may: there is too much clay in our eyes, and too many and too gross vapours of ignorance and infidelity betwixt us and him, for a full and perfect vision: yet, even here, we see him truly, though not clearly; and, the stronger our faith is, the clearer is our sight; and, the clearer our sight is, the greater is our measure of blessedness.

Neither is it a mere presence, or a bare simple vision, which doth either inchoate or perfect our happiness. We find there was a day, when the sons of God came to pre-

selves before the Lord, and Satan came also
am; Job. i. 6: and the wicked's eyes shall see
they have pierced: Zech. xii. 10: we see so
god, in the way of our bliss, as we enjoy. I
now the eye, in these spiritual objects, betwixt
us there is a gracious relation, hath a certain
indicatory faculty, which, in these material things,

"O taste and see," saith the psalmist, "how
Lord is;" as if our sight were more inwardly
ve of heavenly pleasures, than our most sen-
tion.

bodily objects, either there is no operation upon
or to no purpose. The eye is never the warmer,
a fire afar off: nor the colder, for beholding
e no whit the richer, for seeing heaps of trea-
the fairer, for viewing another's beauty. But,
erful and glorious influence there is of God into
d senses, that we cannot see him, by the eye of
ere, and not be the happier; we cannot see him
he eye of our separated souls, and not be per-
ous: and the one of these doth necessarily make
e other; for, what is grace here, but glory
d what is glory above, but grace perfected?

er therefore here, hath pitched the eye of his
the Invisible, doth but continue his prospect,
mes to heaven. The place is changed: the
he same; the act, more complete. As then,
look to have our eyes blessed with the perpe-
of God, in the highest heavens; let us acquaint
ehand, with the constant and continual sight
his vale of mortality.

ooner have our eyes been thus lifted up above
o the sight of the Invisible: than they must be
ast down, and turned inwards, to see our own
ess; how weak and poor we are; how frail;
nd momentary: how destitute of all good; how
to all sin and misery. Contrarieties make all
ter discerned. And, surely, however it be com-
n, that the nearness of the object is a hindrance
ht; yet here, the more closely we behold our
tition, the more clearly we shall discern, and the

more fully shall we be convinced of this displeasing truth. It is not for us to look back, like the heirs of some decayed house, at what we were : whoever was the better for a past happiness ?

(1.) Alas, what are we now ? miserable dust and ashes ; earth, at the best ; at the worst, hell. Our being is vanity ; our substance, corruption : our life is but a blast ; our flesh worms-meat : our beginning, impotent above all creatures ; (even worms can crawl forward so soon as they are, so cannot we ;) our continuance, short and troublesome ; our end, grievous : who can assure himself of one minute of time, of one dram of contentment ?

(2.) But, woe is me ! other creatures are frail too : none, but man, is sinful. Our soul is not more excellent, than this tainture of it is odious and deadly. Our composition lays us open to mortality ; but our sin exposes us to the eternal wrath of God, and, the issue of it, eternal damnation. The grave waits for us, as men ; hell, as sinners. Beasts compare with us, in our being ; in our sinning, devils insult over us.

(3.) And now, since the spring is foul, how can the streams be clear ? Alas, what act of ours is free from this woeful pollution ? Who eats, or drinks, or sleeps, or moves, or talks, or thinks, or hears, or prays, without it ? Even he that was blessed with the sight of the third heaven, as tired with this clog, would say, " O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death ? " Blessed apostle, if thou wert so sensible of thy indwelling corruptions, who knewest nothing by thyself ; how must our hearts needs rend with shame and sorrow, who are guilty of so many thousand transgressions, which our impotence can neither avoid nor expiate ! How justly do we fear God, since we have deserved to be under so deep a condemnation !

II. Thus, therefore, when a man shall have stedfastly fixed his eyes upon the dread majesty of an ever-present God, and upon the deplored wretchedness of his own condition, he shall be in a meet capacity to receive this holy fear, whereof we treat. Neither indeed is it possible, for him, to see that all-glorious presence ; and not presently thereupon, find himself affected with a trembling kind of

awfulness: neither can he look upon his own vileness, without an humble and bashful dejection of soul: but, when he shall see both these, at once; and compare his own shameful estate, with the dreadful incomprehensible majesty of the great God; his own impotence, with that almighty power; his own sinfulness, with that infinite purity and justice; his own misery, with the glory of that immense mercy: how can he choose, but be wholly possessed, with a devout shivering and religious astonishment? The heart then, thus tempered with the high thoughts of God, and the humble conceits of ourselves, is fit for the impression of this fear; which is no other, than an **AWFUL DISPOSITION OF THE SOUL TO GOD.**

Wherein there is a double stamp, or signature: the one, is an inward adoration of the majesty seen and acknowledged; the other, a tender and filial care of being secretly approved of God; and of avoiding the displeasure and offence of that God whom we so adore. The first, is a continual bowing the knees of our hearts to that great and holy God: both inwardly blessing and praising him, in all his divine attributes, in his infinite power, wisdom, justice, mercy, and truth: and humbly submitting and resigning ourselves wholly to his divine pleasure in all things, whether for his disposing or chastising.

1. All true adoration begins from within. Even the soul hath the same parts and postures with the body: as, therefore, it hath eyes to see; so it hath a tongue to speak unto, and a knee to bend unto the majesty of the Almighty. Shortly then; we shall inwardly adore the God of heaven, when our hearts are wrought to be awfully affected to the acknowledgment, chiefly of his infinite greatness and infinite goodness. And this shall be best done, by the consideration of the effects of both. Even in meaner matters, we cannot attain to the knowledge of things, by their causes; but are glad to take up with this secondary information: how much more, in the highest of all causes; in whom there is nothing, but transcendency and infiniteness!

(1) We shall therefore most feelingly adore the infinite greatness of God, upon representing unto ourselves, the wonderful work of his Creation; and his infinite good-

ness, in the no less wonderful work of our Redemption. "For," as the great Doctor of the Gentiles most divinely says, "the invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen; being understood by the things that are made; even his eternal power and godhead." Rom. i. 20. Even so, O God, if we cannot see thee, we cannot but see the world, that thou hast made; and, in that, we see some glimpses of thee. When we behold some goodly pile of building, or some admirable picture, or some rarely-artificial engine, our first question uses to be, "Who made it?" and we judge of and admire the skill of the workman, by the excellent contrivance of the work: how can we do otherwise, in this mighty and goodly frame of thy universe? Lord, what a world is this of thine, which we see! What a vast, what a beautiful fabric is this, above and about us! Lo, thou, that madest such a heaven, canst thou be other than infinitely glorious? O the power and wisdom of such a Creator! every star is a world alone: the least of those globes of light, are far greater than this our whole inferior world of earth and waters, which we think scarce measurable; and what a world of these lightsome worlds hast thou marshalled together, in that one firmament! and yet what room hast thou left, in that large contignation, for more! so as the vacant space, betwixt one star and another, is more in extent, than that which is filled. In how exact a regularity do these celestial bodies move, ever since their first setting forth: without all variation of the time or place of their rising or setting; without all change of their influences! In what point and minute, Adam's new created eyes saw them begin and shut up their diurnal motions, we, his late posterity, upon that same day and in the same climate, find them still: how have they looked upon their spectators, in millions of changed generations; and are still where they were, looking still for more! But, above the rest, who can but be astonished at that constant miracle of nature, the glorious sun; by whose beams, all the higher and lower world is illuminated; and by whose sole benefit, we have use of our eyes? O God, what were the world, without it, but a vast and sullen dungeon of confusion and horror; and, with it, what a theatre of beauty and wonder! what a sad season is our

midnight, by reason of his farthest absence ! and yet, even then, some glimpses of emanations, and remainders of that hidden light, diffuse themselves through the air and forbid the darkness to be absolute. O what a hell were utter darkness ! what a reviving and glorious spectacle it is, when the morning opens the curtains of heaven, and shews the rising majesty of that great ruler of the day, which too many eyes have seen with adoration ; never any saw, without wonder and benediction. And if thy creature be such, what, oh, what art thou, that hast made it ? As for that other faithful witness in heaven, what a clear and lasting testimony doth it give to all beholders, of thine omnipotence ? Always, and yet never changing : still uniform in her constant variations, still regular in the multiplicity of her movings.

And O God, what a train doth that great queen of heaven, by thine appointment, draw after her ! no less than this vast element of waters, so many thousand miles distant from her sphere. She moves in heaven : the sea follows her in this inferior orb, and measures his paces by hers. How deep, how spacious, how restlessly turbulent is that liquid body ! and how tamed and confined by thine almightiness ! How justly didst thou expostulate with thy people of old, by thy prophet Jeremiah ; “ Fear ye not me, saith the Lord ; will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bounds of the sea, by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it : and, though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet they cannot prevail ; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it ? Jer. v. 22.

And, what a stupendous work of omnipotence is it, that thou, O God, hast hanged up this huge globe of water and earth, in the midst of a yielding air, without any stay or foundation, save thine own eternal decree ! How wonderful art thou in thy mighty winds, which, whence they come, and whither they go, thou only knowest ; in thy dreadful thunder and lightnings ; in thy threatening comets, and other fiery exhalations ! With what marvellous variety of creatures hast thou peopled all these thy roomy elements ; all of several kinds, fashions, natures, dispositions, uses ; and yet all their innumerable motions, actions, events, are predetermined and over-ruled by

thine all-wise and almighty providence ! What man can but open his eyes, and see round about him these demonstrations of thy divine power and wisdom, and not inwardly praise thee in thine excellent greatness ? For my own practice, I cannot find a better notion, whereby to work my heart to an inward adoration of God, than this—thou that hast made all this great world, and guidest and governest it, and fillest and comprehendest it, being thyself infinite and incomprehensible : and I am sure there can be no higher representation of the divine greatness unto ourselves.

Although withal we may find enough at home ; for what man, that looks no further than himself, and sees the goodly frame of his body, erected and employed for the harbour of a spiritual and immortal soul, can choose but say, “ I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made ? ”

(2.) Surely could we forget all the rest of the world, it is enough to fetch us upon our knees, and to strike a holy awe into us, to think, that “ in him we live, and move, and have our being : ” for in these our particular obligations, there is a mixed sense both of the greatness, and goodness of our God ; which, as it manifestly shews itself in the wondrous work of our excellent creation ; so most of all magnifies itself in the exceedingly gracious work of our Redemption. “ There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared, ” saith the sweet singer of Israel. Lo, power doth not more command this holy fear, than mercy doth, though both here meet together ; for as there was infinite mercy mixed with power, in thus creating us, so also there is a no less mighty power mixed with infinite mercy in our redemption. What heart can but awfully adore thy sovereign mercy, O blessed God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in sending thine only and co-equal Son, the Son of thy love, the Son of thine eternal essence, out of thy bosom, down from the height of celestial glory, into this vale of tears and death, to abase himself in the susception of our nature, to clothe himself with the rags of our humanity, to endure temptation, shame, death, for us ? O blessed Jesus, the Redeemer of mankind, what soul can be capable of a sufficient adoration of thine in-

conceivable mercy in thy mean and despicable incarnation, in thy miserable and toilsome life, in thy bloody agony, in thine ignominious and tormenting passion, in thy woeful sense of thy Father's wrath in our stead, and, lastly, in thy bitter and painful death? Thou that knewest no sin, wert made sin for us; thou that art omnipotent, wouldest die, and, by thy death, hast victoriously triumphed over death and hell. It is enough, O Saviour, it is more than enough, to ravish our hearts with love, and to bruise them with a loving fear. O blessed Spirit, the God of comfort, who, but thou only, can make our souls sensible of thy unspeakable mercy, in applying to us the wonderful benefit of this our dear redemption, in the great work of our inchoate regeneration, in the mortifying of our evil and corrupt affections, in raising us to the life of grace, and preparing us for the life of glory? O God, if mercy be proper to attract fear, how must our hearts, in all these respects, needs be filled with an awful regard of thy divine bounty! "Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; before the sons of men!" Ps. xxxi. 19.

(3.) Now we must not think this inward adoration of the greatness and goodness of God to be one simple act, but that which is sweetly compounded of the improvement of many holy affections; for there cannot but be love mixed with this fear; "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of his love," Ecclus. xxv. 12. And this fear must be mixed with joy; "Rejoice with trembling," Ps. ii. 11. And this fear and joy are still mixed with hope; for "in the fear of the Lord is strong confidence," Prov. xiv. 26; and "the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy," Ps. xxxiii. 18. As therefore, we are wont to say, that our bodies are not, neither can be, nourished with any simple ingredient; so may we truly say of our souls, that they neither receive any comfort or establishment, nor execute any powers of theirs, by any sole single affection; but require a gracious mixture for both. As that Father said of obedience, we may truly say of grace, that it is all copulative.

(4.) Neither must we think, that one only impression of this holy fear and inward adoration will serve the turn,

to season all our following disposition and carriage; but there must be a virtual continuation thereof, in all the progress of our lives. Our schools do here seasonably distinguish of perpetuity; whether of the second act, when all our several motions and actions are so held on, as that there is no cessation or intermission of their performance, which we cannot here expect; or of the first act, when there is a habit of this inward adoration settled upon the heart so constantly, that it is never put off, by whatever occurrences, so that, whatsoever we do, whatsoever we endeavour, hath a secret relation thereunto. And this second way we must attain unto, if ever we will aspire to any comfort, in the fruition of God's presence here upon earth, and our meet disposition towards him. I have often thought of that deep and serious question of the late judicious and honourable Sir Fulke Greville, Lord Brook, a man worthy of a fairer death and everlasting memory, moved to a learned kinsman of mine, much interested in that nobleman; who, when he was discoursing of an incident matter, very considerable, was taken off with this quick interrogation of that wise and noble person; "What is that to the Infinite?" secretly implying, that all our thoughts and discourse must be reduced thither; and that they fail of their ends, if they be any other where terminated. It was a saying well becoming the profound judgment and quintessential notions of that rare, memorable peer. And, certainly, so it is: if the cogitations and affections of our hearts be not directed to the glory of that infinite God, both they are lost, and we in them.

(5.) Religious adoration begins in the heart, but rests not there, it diffuses itself through the whole man, commanding all the powers of the soul, and all the parts of the body, to comply in a reverent devotion; so that, as we fear the Lord whom we serve, so we serve the Lord with fear. Where the heart stoops, it cannot be but the knees must bend, the eyes and hands must be lifted up; and the whole body will strive to testify the inward veneration: as upon all occasions, so especially when we have to deal with the sacred affairs of God, and offer to present ourselves to any of his immediate services. Our fear cannot be smothered in our bosoms. Every thing that per-

tains to that infinite Majesty, must carry from us due testifications of our awe; his name, his word, his services, his house, his messengers. I cannot allow the superstitious niceties of the Jews in the matters of God; yet I find in their practice many things worthily imitable; such as savour of the fear of their father Isaac, and such as justly shame our profane carelessness.

[1.] There is no wise man, but must needs dislike their curious scruples, concerning that ineffable *name*, the letters and syllables whereof they held in such dreadful respect, that they deemed it worthy of death, for any but sacred lips, and that but in set times and places, to express it; as if the mention of it pierced the side of God, together with their own heart. And, if the name of God were written upon their flesh, that part might not be touched, either with water or ointment. But well may we learn this point of wit and grace from this first, and then the only, people of God; not rashly, slightly, regardlessly, to take the awful name of God into our mouths, but to hear and speak it, when occasion is given, with all holiness and due veneration.

There are those who stumble at their adoration at the blessed name of Jesus, prescribed and practised by our church; unjustly conceiving, that we put a superstitious holiness in the very sound and syllabical enunciation of the word; whereas it is the person of that blessed Saviour, to whom, upon this occasion, our knees are bended; a gesture, so far out of the just reach of blame, that if it seemed good to the wisdom of the church to allot this reverent respect to all, whatsoever the names, whereby the majesty of God, in the whole sacred Trinity, is signified and expressed to men, it were most meet to be accordingly exhibited unto them. And now since it hath, without inhibition of the like regard to the rest, pitched upon that name, which, intimating and comprising in it the whole gracious work and immediate author of our dear redemption, hath been exposed to the reproach and opposition of the gainsaying world; we cannot, if we be not wanting to our filial obedience, detract our observance of so ancient and pious an institution. Never any contempt was dared to be cast upon the glorious name of the Almighty and

absolute Deity; only the state of exinanition subjected the Son of God to the scorn and under-valuation of the world: justly, therefore, hath our holy and gracious Mother thought fit and ordained, upon that person and name which seemed less honourable and lay more open to affront, to bestow the more abundant honour. In the mean time, as she is a professed encourager and an indulgent lover of all true devotion, she cannot but be well pleased, with whatsoever expressions of reverence we give to the divine Majesty, under whatsoever terms, uttered by our well advised and well instructed tongues.

I have known and honoured, as most worthy a constant imitation, some devout persons, who never durst mention the name of God in their ordinary communication, without uncovering of their heads, or elevation of their hands, or some such other testimony of reverence. And certainly, if the heart be so thoroughly possessed with a solemn awe of that infinite Majesty, as it ought; the tongue dares not presume, in a sudden unmannerliness, to blurt out the dreadful name of God, but shall both make way for it by a premised deliberation, and attend it with a reverent elocution.

I am ashamed to think how far we are surpassed by heathen piety. The ancient Grecians, and, amongst the rest, Plato, as Suidas well observes, when they would swear by their Jupiter, out of the mere dread and reverence of his name, forbore to mention him; breaking off their oath with a *μὰ τόν*; as those who only dare to owe the rest to their thoughts; and Climas, the Pythagorean, out of this regard, would rather undergo a mulct of three talents, than swear; while the profane mouths of many Christians, make no difference in their appellation between their God and their servant.

[2.] As the name, so the *word* of our maker challengeth an awful regard from us, as a reflection of that fear, we owe to the omnipotent Author of it. What worlds of nice caution have the masters of the synagogue prescribed to their disciples, for their demeanour towards the book of the law of their God! No letter of it might be writ without a copy; no line of it without a rule, and the rule must be upon the back of the parchment; no parchment might

be employed in this service but that which is made of the skin of a clean beast; no word might be written in a different colour, insomuch as when, in the Pentateuch of Alexander the Great, the name of Jehovah was, in presence of honour, written in golden characters, their great Rabbins condemned the whole volume to be obliterated and defaced; no man might touch it, but with the right hand, and without a kiss of reverence; no man might sit in the presence of it; no man might so much as spit before it; no man might carry it behind him, but must lay it next to his heart, in his travels; no man might offer to read it, but in a clean place; no man might sell it, though the copy were moth-eaten, and himself half famished. And is the word of the everlasting God of less worth and authority now, than it hath been? Or is there less cause of our reverence of those divine oracles, than theirs? Certainly if they were superstitiously scrupulous, it is not for us to be carelessly slovenly, and neglective of that sacred book, out of which we shall once be judged. Even that impure Koran of the Turks is forbidden to be touched by any, but pure hands. It was not the least praise of Carlo Borromeo, the late saint of Milan, that he would never read the divine scripture, but upon his knees: and, if we profess to bear no less inward honour to that sacred volume, why should we, how can we, think it free for us to entertain it with an unmannerly neglect?

[3.] As to the name and word, so to the *services* of God, must the efficacy of our holy fear be diffused; and these, whether private or public.

If we pray, our awe will call us, either to a standing on our feet, as servants; or a bowing of our knees, as supplicants; or, a prostration on our faces, as dejected penitents: neither, when the heart is a camel, can the body be an elephant. What prince would not scorn the rudeness of a sitting petitioner? It was a just distinction of Socrates* of old, that "to sacrifice, is to give to God; to pray, is to beg of God:" and who is so liberal as to cast away his alms upon a stout and unreverent beggar?

* Τὸ δῶκεν, δωρεῖσθαι ἐς τὰ θεοῖς τὸ δὲ εὐχεσθαι, αἰτεῖν τὰς θεῶς. Plat. Apol.

If we attend God's message, in the mouth of his holy servants, whether read or preached, our fear will frame us to a reverent carriage of our bodies; so that our very outward deportment may really seem to speak the words of the good centurion; "Now we are all here present before God, to hear all things, that are commanded thee of God," Acts x. 33. We shall need no law to vail our bonnets, save that in our own breast. It was a great word, that Simeon,* the son of Satach, said to the Jewish prince and priest, convened before their Sanhedrim; "Thou standest not before us, but before him that said, Let the world be made, and it was made." Did we think so, how durst we sit in a bold sauciness, while that great embassy is delivered, with our hats on our heads; as if we acknowledged no presence, but of our inferiors? Yea, that which is a shame to say, those very apprentices who dare not cover their heads at home, where their master is alone, yet, in God's house, where they see him in a throng of his betters, waiting upon the ordinances of the God of heaven, think it free for them, equally to put on, and to be no less fellows with their master, than he is with his Maker; as if the place and service gave a public privilege to all comers, of a profane lawlessness. Surely the same ground, whereon the apostle built his charge for the covering of the heads of the women, serves equally for the uncovering of the heads of the men, "because of the angels," 1 Cor. xi. 10; yea more, because of the God of the angels, who, by these visible angels of his church, speaks to us, and solicits our salvation.

If we address ourselves to the dreadful mysteries of the blessed sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus, our fear will bend our knees, in a meet reverence to that great and gracious Saviour, who is there lively represented, offered, given, sealed up to our souls; who, at that heavenly table, is, as St. Jerome truly says, both the guest and the banquet. Neither can the heart that is seasoned with true piety, be afraid of too lowly a participation of the Lord of glory; but rather resolves, that he is not worthy of knees, who will not here bow them; for,

* Talmud.

who should command them; if not their Maker, if not their Redeemer? Away with the monsters of opinion and practice concerning this sacrament. Christ Jesus is here already tendered to us; and who can, who dares, take him, but on his knees? What posture can we use with our fellows, if we sit with our God and Saviour? At our best, well may we say, with the humble centurion, "Lord, we are not worthy thou shouldest come under our roof;" but, if we prepare not both souls and bodies, to receive him reverently, our sinful rudeness shall make us utterly incapable of so blessed a presence.

[4.] Neither doth our awful regard reach only to the actions of God's service; but it extends itself even to the very *house* which is called by his name, "the place where his honour dwelleth." For as the presence of God gives a holiness to what place soever he is pleased to shew himself in, as the sun carries an inseparable light wheresoever it goes, so that holiness calls for a meet veneration from us. It was a fit word for that good Patriarch who swore by his father's fear, when he spake of his Bethel; "How dreadful is this place! This is none other, but the house of God; this is the gate of heaven," Gen. xxviii. 17.

The several distances and distinctions that were observed in the temple of God at Jerusalem, are famously known. None might sit within the verge thereof, but the king; all others either stood or kneeled. I have read of some sects of men so curiously scrupulous, that their priests were not allowed to breathe in their temple; but were commanded, while they went in to sweep the floor, to hold their wind, like those that dive for sponges at Samos, to the utmost length of time; and, when they would vent their suppressed air and change it for new, to go forth of the doors, and return with a fresh supply. But we are sure the Ethiopian Christians are so holily mannerly, that they do not allow any man so much as to spit in their churches; and if such a defilement happen, they cause it to be speedily cleansed.

What shall we then say of the common profaneness of those careless Christians who make no distinction betwixt their church and their barn; who care not to look unto their foul feet, when they come under this sacred

roof; who with equal irreverence, stumble into God's house and their tavern; who can find no fitter place for their ambulatory, their burse, their counting-house, their sepulchre?

It is recorded of St. Swithin the no less famous than humble bishop of Winchester, that, when he died, he gave charge that his body should not, in any case, be buried within the church; but laid where his grave might be wet with rain, and open to weather and passengers; conceiving, I suppose, that sacred place too good for the repository of the best carcasses. Surely we cannot easily entertain too venerable an opinion of the habitation of the Almighty. If our hearts have the honour to be the spiritual temples of God, we shall gladly give all due honour to his material temples: and, doubtless, in all experience, we shall so respect the house, as we are affected to the owner. It was the discipline and practice of the Etruscans, from whom old Rome learned much of her skill in auguries and many mysteries of religion, that those deities whom they desired to harbour in their own breasts, as Virtue, Peace, Modesty, should have temples erected within their walls; but those which were the presidents of wars and combustions, or pleasures and sensuality, as Mars, Venus, Vulcan, should take up with temples without their walls: and even so it is, and will be ever with us; if we have a holy regard to the God of Heaven, and adore him as inhabiting our bosoms, we cannot but give all fair and venerable respects to those houses which he hath taken up for his own worship and presence.

[5.] Neither, lastly, can God's very *messengers*, though partners of our own infirmities, escape some sensible reflections of our fear. It was the rule of the Jews, that the very prince of the people, if he would consult God's oracle, out of reverence to that divine pectoral, must reverently stand before that priest; who, at other times, was bound to give lowly obedience to his sovereign Lord.

What great Alexander did to the Jewish high priest, who knows not? Neither hath the practice of the godly emperors in the Christian church, through all successions of ages, savoured of less regard. Even the late Cæsar Ferdinand, in the sight of our English, not long before

his end, together with his empress, received an episcopal benediction publicly upon his knees.

Away with that insolent pomp of kissing toes, which Justus Lipsius justly called once “foul and servile;” fit for a Caligula, or Maximinus the younger, or a Diocletian. Away with the proud horsing on shoulders, or treading on necks, or the lackeying of princes. It was a moderate word of Cardinal Zabarel, concerning his great master: “So is he to be honoured, that he be not adored.” Surely when religion was at the best, great peers thought it no scorn to kiss the venerable hands of their spiritual fathers; and did not grudge them eminent titles of honour.

It was but a simple port that Elijah carried in the world; who, after that astonishing wonder of fetching down fire and water from heaven, thought it no abasement to be Ahab’s lackey from Carmel to Jezreel; 1 Kings xviii. 46. yet Obadiah, who was high steward to the king of Israel, even on that day could fall on his face to him, and say, “Art thou that my Lord Elijah.”

Not much greater was the state of those Christian bishops, who began now to breathe from the bloody persecutions of the heathen emperors: yet, with what dear-ness, did that gracious Constantine, in whom this island is proud to challenge no small share, kiss those scars which they had received for the name of Christ! With what titles, did he dignify them! as one, that saw Christ in their faces; and meant, in their persons, to honour his Saviour.

And indeed there is so close and indissoluble a relation, betwixt Christ and his messengers, that their mutual interest can never be severed. What prince doth not hold himself concerned in the honours or affronts that are done to his ambassadors? Those keys which God hath committed to our hands, lock us so fast to him, that no power in earth or hell can separate us: but still that word must stand fast in heaven, “He that despiseth you, despiseth me.”

In vain shall they therefore pretend to fear God, who contemn and disgrace their spiritual governors. There is a certain plant, which our herbalists call “herba impia”

or “wicked cud-weed,” whose younger branches still yield flowers, to over-top the elder: such weeds grow too rife abroad; it is an ill soil, that produceth them. I am sure, that where the heart is manured and seasoned with a true fear of the Almighty, there cannot but be an awful regard to our spiritual pastors. Well are those two charges conjoined, “Fear God, and honour his priests;” Ecclus. vii. 31.

(6.) Hitherto having considered that part of holy fear, which, consisting in an inward adoration of God, expresseth itself in the awful respects to his name, word, services, house, messengers; we descend to that other part, which consists in our humble subjection and self-resignation to his good pleasure in all things, whether to order, or correct.

[1.] The suffering part is the harder. It was a gracious resolution of old Eli “It is the Lord, let him do whatsoever he will.” 1 Sam. iii. 18. Surely, that man, though he were but an ill father to his worse sons, yet he was a good son to his Father in heaven: for, nothing but a true filial awe could make the heart thus pliant, that represents ourselves to us as the clay, and our God to us as the potter; and therefore shows us how unjustly we should repine at any form or use that is by his hand put upon us.

I could envy that word which is said to have fallen from the mouth of Francis of Assise, in his great extremity, “I thank thee O Lord God, for all my pain; and I beseech thee, if thou think good, to add unto it a hundred fold more.” Neither was it much different from that which I have read, as reported of pope Adrian, but, I am sure, was spoken by a worthy divine, within my time and knowledge, of the university of Cambridge, whose labours are of much note and use in the church of God, master Perkins; who, when he lay in his last and killing torment of the stone, hearing the by-standers praying for a mitigation of his pain, wished them not to pray for an ease of his complaint, but for an increase of his patience. These speeches cannot proceed but from subdued, and meek, and mortified souls; more intent upon the glory of their Maker, than their own peace and relaxation.

And certainly the heart thus seasoned, cannot but be equally tempered to all conditions, as humbly acknowledging the same hand both in good and evil; and therefore, even frying in Phalaris's bull, as the philosopher said of a wise man, will be able to say, "*Quàm suave!*" "How pleasant!" Was it true of that heathen martyr Socrates, that, as in his life-time he was not wont to change his countenance upon any alteration of events, so, when he should come to drink his hemlock, as Plato reports it, no difference could be descried either in his hand or face; no paleness in his face, no trembling in his hand; but a steadfast and fearless taking of that fatal cup, as if it differed not from the wine of his meals?

Even this resolution was no other than an effect of the acknowledgment of that one God, for which he suffered. If so, I cannot less magnify that man for his temper, than the oracle did for his wisdom: but I can do no less than bless and admire the known courage and patience of those Christian martyrs, who, out of a loving fear of him, who only can save, and cast both bodies and souls into hell, despised shame, pain, death, and manfully insulted upon their persecutors. Blessed Ignatius could profess to challenge and provoke the furious lions, to his dilaniation: blessed Cyprian could pray, that the tyrant would not repent of the purpose of dooming him to death: and that other holy bishop when his hand was threatened to be cut off, could say, "Cut off both."

It is not for me to transcribe volumes of martyrologies. All that holy army of conquering Saints began their victories in an humble awe of him, whose they were; and cheerfully triumphed over irons, and racks, and gibbets, and wheels, and fires, out of a meek and obedient submission to the will and call of their ever-blessed God, and most dear Redeemer; insomuch as St. Chrysostom professes to find patterns and parallels for himself, in all varieties of torments, and whatsoever several forms of execution: and the blessed apostle hath left us a red calendar of these constant witnesses of God, whose memory is still on earth, their crown in heaven; Heb. xi. 36. 38.

[2.] Neither is it thus only in undaunted sufferings for

the cause of God; but our awe subjects us also to the good will of God in all whatsoever changes of estate. Do I smart with afflictions? "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him," Mich. vii. 9. "I held my peace, because thou, Lord, hast done it." Do I abound in blessings? "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?" 2 Sam. vii. 18. In both? "I have learned, in whatsoever condition I am, therewith to be content." Phil. iv. 11.

2. Thus do we bow the knees of our hearts to God in our adoration of his majesty; both in duly magnifying his greatness and goodness, and in our humble submission to his holy and gracious pleasure. There remains that other signature of our awful disposition, which consists in a *tender and child-like care, both of his secret approbation of us, and of our avoidance of his displeasure and our offence towards him*: these two part not asunder; for he who desires to be approved, would be loth to displease.

The heart that is rightly affected to God, is ambitious, above all things under heaven, of the secret allowance of the Almighty; and, therefore, is careful to pass a continual and exact inquisition upon all its thoughts; much more upon its actions; what acceptation or censure they find above; (like as some timorous child, upon every stitch that she takes in her first sampler, looks tremblingly in the face of her mistress, to see how she likes it) as well knowing, that the law of God was not given us, as some have said of Benedict's rule, only to profess, but to perform; and that, accordingly, the conscience shall find either peace or tumult. As we are wont, therefore, to say of the dove that, at the picking up of every grain, she casts her eyes up to heaven, so will our goodly fear teach us to do, after all our speeches and actions; for which cause it will be necessary to exercise our hearts with very frequent, if not continual, ejaculations. I remember the story tells us of that famous Irish saint, of whom there are many monuments in these western parts, that he was wont to sign himself no less than a hundred times in an hour. Away with all superstition: although cardinal Bellarmin tells us, not improbably,

that, in the practice of those ancient Christians, their crossing was no other than a silent kind of invocation of that Saviour who was crucified for us. Surely I should envy any man who hath the leisure and grace to lift up his heart thus often to his God, let the glance be never so short : neither can such an one choose but be full of religious fear. I like not the fashion of the Euchites who were all prayer, and no practice ; but the mixture of these holy elevations of the soul with all our actions, with all recreations, is so good and laudable, that whosoever is most frequent in it, shall pass with me, for the most devout and the most conversant with heaven.

But the most proper and pregnant proof of this fear of God, is the fear of offending God ; in which regard, it is perfectly filial. The good child is afraid of displeasing his father, though he were sure not to be beaten ; whereas the slave is afraid of stripes only, not of displeasure. Out of this dear awe to his Father in heaven, the truly regenerate trembles to be but tempted ; and yet resolves not to yield to any assault : whether proffers of favour, or violence of battery, all is one. The obfirmed soul will hold out, and scorns so much as to look of what colour the flag is ; having learned to be no less afraid of sin, than of hell : and, if the option were given him, whether he would rather sin without punishment, or be punished without sin, the choice would not be difficult ; any torment were more easy than the consciousness of a divine displeasure. It was good Joseph's just question, " How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God ? " Gen. xxxix. 9. Lo, it is the sin that he sticks at, not the judgment ; as one who would have feared the offence if there had been no hell.

But if it fall out that the renewed person, as it is incident to the most dutiful children of God, be, through a violent temptation and his own infirmity, miscarried into a known sin ; how much warm water doth it cost him, ere he can recover his wonted state ! what anxiety, what strife, what torture, what self revenge, what ejaculations and complaints, what unrepining subjection to the rod ! " I have sinned ; what shall I do to thee, O thou preserver of men ? " Job. vii. 20. So I have seen a good-

natured child, that, even after a sharp whipping, could not be quieted, till he had obtained the pardon, and evened the brows, of a frowning parent.

And now, as it is with little ones that have taken a knock by a late fall, the good man walks hereafter with so much the more wary foot, and is the more fearfully jealous of his own infirmity; and finding in himself but the very inclinations towards the first motions of evil, he is careful, according to that wholesome rule of a strict votary, “instantly to dash his new-born evil thoughts against the rock Christ.” And henceforth, out of a suspicion of the danger of excess, he dares not go to the further end of his tether; but, in a wise and safe rigour, abridges himself of some part of that scope which he might be allowed to take; and will stint himself rather than launch out. Indeed right reason teacheth us, to keep aloof from offending that power which we adore. The ancient Almains, holding their rivers for gods, durst not wash their faces with those waters, lest they should violate those deities: and the Jews were taught not to dare to come near an idolatrous grove, though the way were never so direct and commodious. No wise man, however he might have firm footing upon the edge of some high rocky promontory, will venture to walk within some paces of that downfall; but, much more, will his sense and judgment teach him, to refrain from casting himself headlong, like that desperate barbarian in Xenophon, from that steep precipice.

The fear of God, therefore, is a strong retentive from sin; neither can it possibly consist, in whatsoever soul, with a resolution to offend. As then the father of the faithful, when he came into Gerar, a Philistine city, could strongly argue that those heathens would refrain from no wickedness, because the fear of God was not in that place; so we may no less irrefragably infer, where we see a trade of prevalent wickedness, there can be no fear of God.

Woe is me, what shall I say of this last age; but the same that I must say of mine own? As this decrepit body, therefore, by reason of the unequal temper of humours and the defect of radical moisture and heat, cannot but be a sewer of all diseases; so it is, so it will

be, with the decayed old age of this great body of the world, through want of the fear of the everliving God: "Rivers of water," O God, shall "run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy law," Ps. cxix. 136.

But, why do I suggest to the obdured hearts of wilful sinners, the sweet and gracious remedies of a loving fear? This preservative is for children: sturdy rebels must expect other recipes. A frown is a heavy punishment to a dutiful son; scourges and scorpions are but enough for a rebellious vassal. I must lay before such a hell of vengeance; and show them the horrible Tophet, prepared of old, even that bottomless pit of perdition; and tell them of rivers of brimstone, of a worm ever gnawing, of everlasting burnings, of weeping, wailing, and gnashing, when the terrible Judge of the world shall come, "in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey him not." And, certainly, if the sinner had not an infidel in his bosom, the expectation of so direful a condition, to be inflicted and continued upon him unto all eternity, without possibility of any intermission or of any remission, were enough to make him run mad with fear; only unbelief keeps him from a frantic despair, and a sudden leap into his hell.

And if the custom and deceit of sin have wrought an utter senselessness in those brawny hearts, I must leave them over to the woeful sense of what they will not fear; yea, to the too late fear of what they shall not be able either to bear or avoid. Certainly the time will come, when they shall be swallowed up with a dreadful confusion; and shall no more be able not to fear, than not to be. Oftentimes, even in the midst of all their secure jollity, God writes bitter things against them; such as make their knees to knock together, their lips to tremble, their teeth to chatter, their hands to shake, their hearts to fail within them, for the anguish of their souls. Were they as insensate as the earth itself, "Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke," saith the psalmist: "The mountains saw thee, and they trembled," saith Habakkuk.

But if their fear be respited, it is little for their ease: it doth but forbear a little, that it may overwhelm them at once for ever. Woe is me for them! In how heavy and

deplorable case are they, and feel it not! They lie under the fierce wrath of the Almighty, and complain of nothing but ease. "The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him;" saith the prophet Nahum. Yet what a grief it is to see, that so dreadful a power should carry away no more fear from us, wretched men; yea, even from those who are ready to fear where no fear is!

Pains of body, frowns of the great, restraint of liberty, loss of goods, who is there that fears not? But, alas, to avoid these, men fear not to venture upon the displeasure of him, whose anger is death, and who is able to cast body and soul into hell fire. So we have seen fond children, who, to avoid a bugbear, have run into fire or water: so we have seen a starting jade, that, suddenly flying from a shadow, hath cast himself into a ditch. We can but mourn in secret for those who have no tears to spend upon themselves; and tremble for them who will needs gnash. If those that are filthy, will be filthy still; if secure men will set up a trade of sinning; every good heart will take up Nehemiah's resolution, "But so did not I, because of the fear of the Lord," Neh. v. 15: and the practice of holy Habakkuk, "I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble," Hab. iii. 16. It is wise Solomon's good experiment, which he loved to repeat, "By the fear of the Lord, men depart from evil," Prov. xvi. 6; iii. 7: for they say one to another, as the Tremelian version hath it, in Malachi, "The Lord hearkeneth and heareth," Mal. iii. 16: and how dare they, how can they do amiss in that presence? for, as the saints say after the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God almighty: just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints: who shall not fear thee, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy," Rev. xv. 3, 4.

Shortly then, that we may put these two together which are not willing to be severed, whosoever is duly affected with a true filial fear of the Almighty, cannot, by allurements, be drawn to do that which may offend so sweet a

Mercy; cannot, by any difficulties, be discouraged from doing that which may be pleasing to so gracious a Majesty. The magistrate that fears God, dares not, cannot be partial to any wickedness; dares not, cannot be harsh to innocence; managing that sword, wherewith he is entrusted, so as God himself, if he were upon earth, would do it, for the glory of his own just mercy. The messenger of God that fears him on whose errand he goes, dares not, cannot either smother his message, or exceed it: he will, he must lift up his voice like a trumpet, and tell Israel of her sins and Judah of her transgressions; not fearing faces, not sparing offences. The ordinary Christian that fears God, dares not, cannot, but make conscience of all his ways; he dares not defraud nor lie for an advantage; he dares not swear falsely, for a world; he dares not prostitute his body to whatsoever filthiness; he dares not oppress his inferiors; he dares not turn away his own face from the poor, much less dares he grind theirs; in one word, he dares rather die than sin: and, contrarily, what blocks soever nature lays in his way, since his God calls him forth to this combat, he cannot but bid battle to his own rebellious corruptions, and offer a deadly violence to his evil and corrupt affections, and enter the lists with all the powers of darkness, "resisting unto blood," and willingly bleeding, that he may overcome.

Who now would not be in love with this fear? "O fear the Lord, ye his saints: he that fears him, shall lack nothing;" "the Sun of righteousness shall arise unto him, with healing in his wings." In the mean time, "the secret of the Lord is with him;" "the angels of the Lord are ever about him;" "His soul shall dwell at ease" here below; and, above, "salvation is near unto him;" yea, he is already feoffed of life and glory; Prov. xxix. 25.

III. Now, as some careful pilot, who takes upon him to direct a difficult sea-passage, which his long and wary observation hath discovered, doth not content himself to steer a right course in his own vessel, and to shew the eminent sea-marks afar off; but tells, withal, what rocks or shelves lie on either side of the channel, which, upon the least deviation, may endanger the passengers; so must

we do here. Having, therefore, sufficiently declared wherein this fear of God consisteth, what it requireth of us, and how it is acted and expressed by us; it remaineth, that we touch on those **EXTREMES**, which, on both sides, must be carefully avoided. These are, security and presumption, on the one hand; on the other, vicious fear.

1. It was the saying of the wise man, yea, rather of God by him, "Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart, shall fall into mischief," Prov. xxviii. 14. Lo, an obdured *security* is opposed to fear, both in the nature and issue of it. Fear intenerates the heart, making it fit for all gracious impressions: security hardens it, and renders it incapable of good. Fear ends in happiness; security, in an inevitable mischief.

(1.) And these two, though contraries, yet arise from the same cause contrarily applied:

[1.] As the same sun hardens the clay, and softens the wax, it being heat that does both, causing dryness in the one and a dissolution in the other; even so the same beams of divine mercy melt the good heart into a holy fear, and harden the wicked heart in a state of security; for upon the goodness of God to men, both in giving and forgiving, do men grow securely evil and rebellious to their God; being apt to say, "I have sinned, and what harm hath happened unto me?" Eccles. v. 4. Lo, even forbearance obdureth; "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil," Eccl. viii. 11. How much more do the riches of God's goodness, which are the hottest beams of that sun, when they beat directly upon our heads! "The ease of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them," saith Solomon, Prov. i. 32.

Our philosophy tells us, that an extreme heat shuts up those pores, which a moderate heat openeth. It was a sore word of St. Ambrose, that no man can, at once, embrace God's favour, and the world's. Neither can I disallow that observation of a rigorous votary, that the devils of consolation, as he calls them, are more subtle and more pernicious, than those of tribulation: not so much perhaps in their own nature, as from the party they

find in our own breasts. The wise man could say, "Lest I be full; and deny thee, and ask, Who is the Lord?" Prov. xxx. 9.

Even the very heathens have been thus jealously conscious of their own disposition; so that Camillus, when, upon ten years' siege, he had taken the wealthy city Veios, could pray for some mishap to befall himself and Rome, to temper so great a happiness.

This is that, which Gregory the great, upon his exaltation to that papal honour, doth so much complain of in himself: that his inward fall was no less, than his outward rising; and that his dull heart was almost grown stupid with those temporal occasions. And surely so it will be, if there be not a strong grace within us to season our prosperity.

That which the historian observed in the course of the world, that abundance begets delicacy and animosity; that again begets quarrels and vastation of war; and from thence grows poverty; is no less true in the particular state of the soul. If we be rich and high fed, we grow wanton and stomachful, and apt to make war with heaven, till we be taken down again with affliction: thereupon it is, that the wise and holy God hath found it still needful to season our contentments with some mixtures of sorrow; and to proclaim the jubilee of our mirth and freedom, upon the sad day of expiation. The man after God's own heart could say, "In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved," Ps. xxx. 6; but the next ye hear is, "Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled;" and this trouble he professes to have been for his good. Without these meet temperaments, worldly hearts run wild and say, with the scornful men that ruled in Jerusalem, "We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement. When the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come to us; for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves," Is. xxviii. 15. Yea, in a stout insolence, as the prophet Jeremiah expresses it, they belie the Lord, and say, "It is not he; neither shall evil come upon us; neither shall we see sword, or famine," Jer. v. 12.

[2.] Neither yet is it only the abuse of God's long-
Div.—NO. XXXVII.

suffering and bounty, that produceth this ill-habit of security and hard-heartedness ; but especially a custom of sinning. Oft treading hardens the path. The hand that was at the first soft and tender, after it hath been inured to work, grows brawned and impenetrable. We have heard of virgins, who, at the first, seemed modest, blushing at the motions of an honest love ; who, being once corrupt and debauched, have grown flexible to easy entreaties unto unchastity ; and, from thence, boldly lascivious, so as to solicit others, so as to prostitute themselves to all comers, yea, as our casuists complain of some Spanish stews, to an unnatural filthiness. That which our canonists say in another kind, is too true here ; “ Custom can give a jurisdiction ; neither is there any stronger law than it.” The continued use then of any known sin, be it never so small, gives, as Gerson’s phrase is, a strong habituation ; and though it is a true rule, that habits do only incline, not compel, yet the inclination that is wrought by them, is so forcible, that it differs little from violence. Surely so powerful is the habit of sin, bred by ordinary practice, as that it takes away the very sense of sinning ; so that the offender now knows not, that he doth the very act of some evil ; much less, that he sins and offends in doing it ; and now the heart is all turned dead flesh, whether to good or ill. There is not, then, a more dangerous condition incident to the soul of man, than this of security : it bars us of the capacity of any good, that may be wrought upon us ; it exposes us to the success of all temptations ; it draws down the heaviest of God’s judgments upon our heads ; it defies justice ; it rejects mercy ; it makes the heart God’s anvil, which the harder it is struck, the more rebounds the blow ; but the Devil’s feather-bed, wherein he sinks and lies soft at free ease ; neither would that evil Spirit wish for any more pleasing repose ; it flatters the soul with an impossible impunity ; it shifts off necessary vengeance ; lastly, while other dispositions do but yield to a hell, this invites it. By how much more woeful it is, by so much more careful must we be to avoid it.

(2.) If we care for our souls then, we shall zealously apply ourselves to prevent this hellish evil ; which shall

be done, if we shall constantly use all means to keep the heart tender.

[1.] Whereof the first is, frequent meditation upon the judgments of God, attending sinners. It is the apostle's own prescript; "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire," Heb. xii. 28, 29. Could we but stoop down a little and look into hell, we should never come thither: the apprehension of those torments would be sure to keep us from sinning and impenitence. It is a true observation of Cyril, that "the want of belief is guilty of all our obduredness;" for, "Should it be told thee," saith that father, "that a secular judge intends to doom thee to be burned alive to-morrow, how busily wouldst thou employ the remaining time to prevent the judgment! how eagerly wouldst thou run about! how submissively and importunately wouldst thou sue and beg for pardon! how readily wouldst thou pour out thy money to those friends, that should purchase it! And why wouldst thou do all this, but because thou doubtest not of the truth of the report?" Were our hearts no less convinced of the designation of an everlasting burning to the rebellious and impenitent, could we less bestir ourselves? To this purpose also it will much conduce that we meditate often of our own frailty and momentariness. No evil can fasten upon the soul of that man, who hath death ever before his eyes. That father said well, "He easily contemns all things, who thinks to die every day." The servant who said, "My master deferreth his coming," was he, that revelled in the house, and beat his fellows; he durst not have done it, if he had seen his master at the door.

[2.] No whit less prevalent a remedy against security is a firm resolution of the soul to repel the first motions to whatsoever sin; whose nature, as experience tells us, is to gather strength by continuance. Commonly all onsets are weakest in their beginnings; and are then most easily and safely resisted. Custom can never grow, where no action will be admitted to make a precedent. It is well observed by a learned chancellor of Paris, that some filthy and blasphemous cogitations are better overcome

by contemning them than by answering them. If either way they be repulsed, the heart is safe from security.

[3.] But, thirdly, if we have been so far overtaken, as to give way to the penetration of evil, our care must be, to work our hearts to a speedy renovation by repentance. If sin have seized upon the soul, it must not settle there: this is that, which will else work a palpable indisposition. Let a knife be wet with the strongest aquafortis, and presently wiped dry again, the metal is yet smooth, and betrayeth no change; but if that moist fire be suffered to rest upon it awhile, it eats into the blade, and leaves behind some deep notes of corrosion. It is delay in these cases, that breeds the utmost danger. Let a candle that is casually put out, be speedily rekindled at the next flame, neither is the scent offended nor the wick unapt to be straightway re-enlightened: stay but awhile, the whole room complains of the noisome smell; and it will cost perhaps much puffing, and dipping in ashes, ere it can recover the lost light. That which Solomon advises in matter of suretyship, Prov. vi. 4, 5, we must do in the case of our sin—speedily extricate ourselves, and give no sleep to our eyes till we be freed from so dangerous an engagement.

[4.] Moreover it must be our main care not to give any check to the conscience, upon whatsoever occasions. That power hath, as a keen, so a tender edge, and easy to be rebated. When that dictates to a man some duty, or the refraining of some doubtful action, he who disobeys it, makes way for an induration: for when that faculty hath once received a discouragement, it will not be apt to control us in evil; but grows into a careless neglect of what we do or omit, and so declines to an utter senselessness. As therefore we must be careful to have our consciences duly regulated by the infallible word of God, so must we be no less careful still to follow the guidance of our conscience in all our ways. And that all these things may be performed with effect, we must be sure that we do constantly observe all our set exercises of piety—hearing, reading, receiving the blessed sacrament, prayer, and especially strict self-examination, whereby we may come to espy our first failings, and correct our very

propensions to evil. One* said well, that "nature doth not more abhor vacuity, than grace doth idleness." Now all these, if they seem harsh and tedious to corrupt nature, yet, to the renewed heart, familiarly conversant in them, nothing is more pleasing and cordial. The philosopher could say and find, that "virtuous actions are delightful to well-disposed minds;" insomuch as it is defined for the surest argument of a good habit fully acquired, that we find contentment and delectation in good performances.

[5.] Lastly, because ill-used prosperity is apt to obdure the heart, we must be sure to settle in ourselves a right estimation of all these worldly things: which indeed are, as they are taken.

I may well say of riches, as the Jewish rabbins had wont to say of their Cabbala, with a good heart they are good; otherwise they are no better than the mammon of iniquity; and indeed worse than want: but, at their best, they are such as are utterly unable to yield true contentment to the soul. They are good for use, ill for fruition. They are for the hand to employ, not for the heart to set up his rest in.

Hereupon it is, that the holiest men have still both inclined and persuaded to their contempt. That great master† of meditation applauded it in his friend, the cardinal of Cambray, as the happiest condition, that all these earthly and temporal things which his eye beheld, were tedious unto him. And St. Bernard magnifies, in this name, his dear acquaintance, Gilbert bishop of London, that even in that state he would live poor; and the same father would have his monk to take most joy and think himself then welcomest, when the coarsest fare was set before him. Answerable whereunto, but beyond it, was the diet of Valentine, a rigorous votary, who, for ten years together, would eat nothing but bread dipt in water wherein wormwood was steeped; and of that other his fellow, who steeped his bread in lye, that he might eat ashes, with the prophet.

* 'Αἱ κατ' ἀρετὴν ᾧράξεις τοῖς φιλοκάλοις εἰσιν ἡδεῖαι,
Arist. Eth.

† Gers. Epist. ad Card. Cam.

Not to run into extremes, it is sure and necessary counsel which the psalmist gives us, to resolve, if riches increase, not to set our hearts upon them; to account them no other, than as good helps and needful impediments; and all worldly contentments such, as are not worthy to take us up.

It was a question, moved to the founder of some strict devotionists, whether they might laugh with all their hearts; and it is answered negatively, "Non licet." And the devout governor of the votaries of Clareval could give charge to his religious, "Non debet totus manducare;" and it is reported by the writer of his life, if he heard any of his Dorter snoring in his sleep, he would chide that man, as sleeping carnally and securely. Surely the world is and should be the same to them and us, who have no less engaged ourselves to a professed hostility unto all the vanities thereof; and have no more hearty share in the pomps and pleasures of it, than the most reclused anchorites.

At the best, this earth can be no other than our valley of tears, and region of our pilgrimage. Our Giraldus Cambrensis tells us, that his St. Brendan, upon long and wearisome travel, at last went so far, as to come to the sight of the earthly paradise. They may that list, believe it; but sure I am, never any mortal eye, since the angel brandished his sword there, could find ought worthy the name of a paradise in this inferior world. Here is purgatory enough, and perhaps some hell, above ground: but if, as Ortelius of late held, all the whole earth was, at the first, paradise, any man shall now think that any part of it is so still, I shall pity him, and think him worthy the pleasures of these earthly torments.

For us, if we would have our souls safe, we must learn, with the blessed apostle, so to use the world, as if we used it not; and strive to attain to the equable temper of that holy man St. Martin, whose face was neither darkened with sorrow, nor smoothed with laughter; as well knowing, that what affection soever the world wins of us, is lost unto God. Thus, if we shall keep ourselves carefully from the trade of sin and from the fascination of the

world, we shall be sure that our hearts shall not thus be deadened with security.

2. The no less direct, but more active opposite to holy fear, is *presumption*.

(1.) We presume, when, out of an unjust self-love, we entertain a higher opinion of our spiritual estate, than there is cause; whether in respect of the way or of the end—God's favour, as the way; salvation, as the end. We are apt to overween our interest in God's favour and our assured safety thereby, commonly upon a double ground, either matter of event, or matter of ability; for, either we misinterpret fair events, as pledges of happiness and safety; or we mistake those qualities for true graces which are either mere appearances, or perhaps no better than very enormities. Millions of men miscarry both ways, and are therefore so far from fear, as that they go dancing towards their hell.

[1.] It was the strong bulwark, which the Egyptian Jews set up against all Jeremiah's menaces, "We will burn incense to the Queen of Heaven, and pour out drink-offerings to her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then, we had plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil," Jer. xlv. 17. Had their belly been their God, the argument had held well: that deity is best pleased with store of cates; but the true God, many times, even with quails sends leanness.

Carnal hearts know not how to measure felicity, but by the affluence of what most pleases them; and that pleases them most, which gives most contentment to their sense and appetite; wherein, if their desires be answered, they are soon transported from themselves, and now can be no other, than the great favourites of heaven. If Uzziah once feel himself grown strong, his heart is lifted up, 2 Chron. xxvi. 15, 16: why should not a censer fit him, no less than a sceptre? The great dragon of Egypt, when he hath lain at ease a while in the swollen waters of his Nile, can say, "My river is my own, and I have made it for myself," Ezek. xxix. 3. And who is there that hath fished successfully in this sea of the world, but is ready to sacrifice unto

his own nets, and say within himself, "Had I not been so good, I had not sped so well?"

Our naturalists truly observe, that the most poisonous flies are bred in the sweetest fruit trees; so are these most dangerous presumptions, in an outward happiness of condition. Let an Amalekitish Agag be but a little made of, he comes in delicately and says, "Surely the bitterness of death is past," 1 Sam. xv. 32. When a king hath been indulgent, a prophet will not be bloody: all is safe: there may be hope of my crown; there can be no danger of my head. Hereupon it is, that as those whose heads are laid upon down pillows, are not apt to hear noise, the over-prosperous have their ears precluded against all threats of peril, all counsels of reformation; as thinking they neither need to wish themselves better, nor to fear being worse....

And while they applaud themselves as the only darlings, they look overly and scornfully upon the meaner estate of others; and pass deep censures upon the adversities of their miserable neighbours, as if they could not fare ill, if they were not so. Job cannot be afflicted, if he were not a hypocrite. Doth the tower of Siloe, like some dreadful pitfall, overwhelm eighteen citizens of Jerusalem? They were more heinous sinners than their fellows. Doth a viper seize upon St. Paul's hand? "Doubtless, this man is a murderer, whom vengeance suffereth not to live."

Thus the vain hearts of sensual men are carried with those outward events, which God never meant for the distinction of either love or hatred. Those that are rich in these proud conceits, make their imaginary wealth their strong city, which they please themselves in thinking impregnable; and as foolish Micah argued a necessity of God's future beneficence to him, by the good that he had done in procuring a levite to his priest, Judges xvii. 13, so these flatter themselves with an assurance of God's present favour, by the benefits which God hath showered down upon them: wherein it falls out often as it did with the riflers of Semiramis's tomb, who, where they expected to find the richest treasure, met with a deadly poison.

[2.] Neither is it easy to know, whether that other presumption of abilities be not, at least, equally frequent and

dangerous. The proud angel of the church of Laodicea could say, "I am rich, and encreased with goods, and have need of nothing;" not knowing, that she was "wretched, miserable, poor, blind, naked."

How many have we heard to boast of those graces, whereto they have been perfect strangers! How have we known some, who have pretended to no less illumination than Pisanus reports of John of Alverne, who, in a rapture, was elevated above every creature, and his soul swallowed up in the abyss of the Divinity; when it hath been indeed nothing but a fanatical illusion! How ordinarily do we find men challenging no mean share in a lively faith, spiritual joy, fervent zeal, true sanctity; when, in the mean while, they have embraced nothing but the clouds of their own fancies, instead of these heavenly graces; and, by this means, have stript themselves of the possibility of those holy virtues, which they falsely soothed in themselves! For who can care to seek for that, which he thinks he hath already?

Men do not so much covet, as arrogate spiritual gifts. Every Zedekiah can say, "Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me, to speak unto thee? 1 Kings xxii. 24; and, like a spiritual epicure, can clap himself on the breast, with, "Soul, take thy ease, thou hast" grace "enough laid up for many years."

From this opinion of satiety, arises a necessary carelessness of better endeavours; and a contemptuous undervaluing of the poor stock of grace in others; it being commonly incident to these presuming souls, that was of old wont to be said of the Tartars, that they are better invaders of other men's possessions, than keepers of their own. Those censures then, which they should spend upon their own secret corruptions, they are ready to cast upon the seeming enormities of their neighbours; and, as if they would go contrary to the apostles charge, "Be not high minded, but fear;" these men are high-minded, and fear not.

(2.) The way leads to the end; the presumption of the way, to the presumption of the end; over-weening and misprision of grace, to an over-reckoning of an undue salvation.

With what confidence have I heard some, not over-

conscionable men, talk of the assurance of their heaven ; as if the way thither were so short and so plain, that they could not miss it ; as if that passage had neither danger nor difficulty ; as if it were but a remove from the lobby to the great chamber, wherein they can neither err nor fall. Here need no harsh exercises of mortification. Here are no misdoubts of God's desertions, no self-conflicts, no flashes of troubled conscience ; but all is fair and smooth. Have they sinned ? The score is crossed by their surety. Have they forfeited their souls ? Their ransom is paid. Is justice offended ? Mercy hath satisfied. Shortly, they have, by Acesius's ladder, climbed up into heaven ; and stolen the sight of the book of life, and found their name there ; and who can obliterate it ?

I cannot forget a bold word, which, many years ago, I heard fall from a man whom I conceived not to have had any extraordinary reason of confidence. " If I should hear God say, ' There shall but one man be saved,' I would straight say, ' That is I, Lord.' " Surely the man was in good favour with himself, in what terms soever he stood with the Almighty.

Not that I condemn a holy and well-grounded resolution of our spiritual estate. I know who hath charged us to give diligence to make our calling and election sure. Had it not been at all feasible, our wise and good God had not tasked our diligence with it ; and had it been easy and obvious, it might, even without diligence of study and endeavour, have been effected.

Now, as one said of evangelical councils, I must say of this high pitch of Christianity, " It is not for every man, to mount up this steep hill of assurance." Every soul must breathe and pant towards it, as he may ; even as we would and must, to perfection : he is as rare as happy, that attains it. Give me a man who hath worn out himself with a strict austeriety ; who, by many secret bickerings, hath mastered his sturdy and rebellious corruptions ; who, in a trembling awfulness, walks constantly with his God, keeping a severe watch over all his ways, assiduous and fervent in his devotions ; shortly, who hath spent his time in heaven beforehand : why should I not believe, that God hath sealed up to such a soul an assurance of his

future glory? Some transient acts of interposed doubting may and will glance into the holiest heart; but a formed habit of doubt falls not into such an eminence of grace. This is not a lesson for every novice to take out, whose main care must ever be, to “work out his salvation with fear and trembling.” As for spiritual security, let him labour towards it, as that which he would most gladly compass, but not brag of it too soon, as that which he hath already compassed.

(3.) As there is no disease incident to the body, for which nature hath not provided a remedy; so neither is there any spiritual complaint incident to the soul, for which grace affords not a redress. The way of the general cure of presumption, is to take a just estimate of our privileges and abilities; and to work the heart to a true self-dejection and humiliation, under the mighty hand of God.

[1.] Particularly, he can never presume upon those outward commodities, who seriously considers how they are valued by the owner and giver of them. Where are the most curious and rich pearls laid up, but in the mud of the sea? And what is the earth, but, as St. Malachi termed it of old, “God’s purse,” wherein he puts his most precious jewels and metals? And what baser piece hath the world, than this repository?

And if it please him to lay them out, how doth he think them worthy to be bestowed? “He filleth the belly of the ungodly, with his hidden treasure,” saith the psalmist; and, “The earth is given into the hands of the wicked,” saith holy Job in his answer to Bildad, Job ix. 24. Neither is it other, that he observes in his reply to Zophar, “The Tabernacles of robbers prosper; and they that provoke God, are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly,” Job xii. 6. How then can we esteem those things as pledges of favour, which God makes choice to cast upon enemies? which mere natural men have contemned, as not worthy their affectation or regard? With what scorn, did those naked Brachmanni (the relation is fathered upon St. Ambrose) repel the proffered gold?

And if, at any time, it hath pleased him whose the earth is and the fulness thereof, to lade his dear ones with this “thick clay,” as he himself styles it, and to store them

the hottest sun ; the counterfeit shews most gloriously in prosperity, but, when the evil day cometh, it looks like the skin of a dead camelion, nasty and deformed. Lastly, true grace is best alone : the counterfeit is all for witnesses.

In brief, if, in a holy jealousy of our own deceitfulness, we shall put daily interrogatories to our hearts, and pass them under severe examinations, we shall not be in danger to presume upon our mistaken graces ; but the more we search, the more cause we shall find of humialition, and of an awful recognition of God's mercy and our own unworthiness.

(4.) The way not to presume upon salvation, is, in an humble modesty, to content ourselves with the clearly revealed will of our Maker, not prying into his counsels, but attending his commands. It is a grave word, wherein the vulgate translation expresses that place of Solomon, "*Scrutator majestatis, opprimetur à gloriâ ;*" "He that searcheth into majesty, shall be overwhelmed with glory," Proverbs xxv. 27. Amongst those sixteen places of the Bible, which, in the Hebrew, are marked with a special note of regard, that is one ; "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God ; but those things which are revealed, belong unto us and to our children for ever ; that we may do all the words of this law," Deut. xxix. 29. Wherein our main care must be, both not to sever, in our conceit, the end from the means ; and withal to take the means along with us, in our way to the end. It is for the heavenly angels to climb down the ladder from heaven to earth : it is for us only to climb up from earth to heaven. Bold men ! why do we begin at God's eternal decree of our election ; and thence descend to the effects of it, in our effectual calling, in our lively and stedfast faith, in our sad and serious repentance, in our holy and unblameable obedience, in our unfailable perseverance ? This course is saucily preposterous. What have we to do, to be rifling the hidden counsels of the Highest ? Let us look to our own ways. We have his word for this, that if we do truly believe, repent, obey, persevere, we shall be saved ; that if we do heartily desire and effectually endeavour, in the careful use of his appointed means, to

attain unto these saving dispositions of the soul, we shall be sure not to fail of success. What need we look any further, than conscionably and cheerfully to do what we are enjoined, and faithfully and comfortably to expect what he hath promised? Let it be our care not to be wanting in the parts of our duty to God; we are sure he cannot be wanting, in his gracious performances unto us. But if we, in a groundless conceit of an election, shall let loose the reins to our sinful desires and vicious practices, thereupon growing idle or unprofitable, we make divine mercy a pander to our uncleanness, and justly perish in our wicked presumption.

3. The other extreme follows. It may seem a harsh word, but it is a true one, that there may be an evil fear of a good God; a fear of horror, and a fear of distrust. That God who is love itself, is terrible to a wicked heart. Even in the beginning, our first progenitor ran from the face of his late Maker, and hid him in the thickets: for it is a true observation of Tertullian, "No wickedness can be done without fear, because not without the conscience of doing it." Neither can any man flee from himself, as Bernard says: and this conscience reads the terrible things that God writes against the sinner; and holds the glass wherein guilty eyes may see the killing frowns of the Almighty. Now offensive objects cause the spirits to retire, as philosophy and experience teach us; whereupon follows a necessary trepidation in the whole frame of the body. And now the wicked heart could wish there were no God; or, which is all one, that this God had not power to avenge himself; and finding that after all his impotent volitions, the Almighty will be still and ever himself, he is unspeakably affrighted with the expectation of that just hand which he cannot avoid. This terror, if, through the improvement of God's mercy, at the last it drive the sinner to a true penitence, makes a happy amends for its own anguish: otherwise it is but the first flash of that unquenchable fire, which is prepared for damned souls. In this case, men do not so much fear God, as they are afraid of him; and such a torturing fear is never but joined with heart-burning and hatred: wherein sinners demean themselves to God, as they say the lamprey doth to the fisher, by whose

first blow that fish is said to be dulled and astonished, but it is enraged with the next and following. Wretched men ! it is not God's fault, that he is terribly just : no ; it is his glory, that he is mercifully terrible. It is not for me to say, as Spalatensis cites from Cyril, that those who would not be saved, are no less beholden to the bounty of the good God, than those that are brought home to glory. I know and bless God for the difference. But certainly God is wonderfully gracious, as he is also infinitely just, even to those who will needs incur damnation ; having tendered unto them many powerful helps to their repentance, which he hath, with much patience and longanimity, expected. Therefore that God is just, it is his own praise ; that he is terrible, we may thank ourselves, for were it not for our wickedness, there were nothing in God which is not infinitely amiable.

Seest thou then, O sinful man, nothing at all in God's face, but frowns and fury ? Doth every beam of his angry eye dart vengeance into thy soul, so that thou wouldst fain run away from his presence ; and woo the rocks and mountains to fall upon thee, and hide thee from the sight of that dreadful countenance ? Cleanse thy hands : purge thy heart : clear thine eyes with the tears of true contrition : and then look up, and tell me, whether thou dost not see a happy change of aspect ; whether thou canst now discern ought in that face, but a glorious loveliness, fatherly indulgence, unconceivable mercy ; such as shall ravish thy soul with a divine love, with a joy unspeakable and glorious.

4. Seldom ever is the fear of horror separated from a fear of distrust ; which, in the height of it, is that which we call despair ; for when the soul apprehends a deep fear of God's dereliction, it cannot but be filled with horror. Now as the holy and well moderated fear gives glory to God in all his attributes, so this extreme of it affronts and dishonours him in them all, but especially in his mercy and truth—in his truth, suggesting that God will not make good his promises ; in his mercy, suggesting that he either cannot or will not forgive and save. It was a true observation of St. Hilary, that “ it is not the least office and effect of faith, to fear : ” for that it is said by the pro-

phet Isaiah, "He shall fill them with the spirit of the fear of the Lord;" and, again, we are charged to work out our salvation "with fear." But there cannot be an act more opposite to faith, than to fear distrustfully, to despair in fearing: none more injurious either to God or our own souls: for surely, as Cyril well says, "The wickedness of our offences to God, cannot exceed his goodness toward us:" the praise whereof from his creature he affects and esteems so highly, as if he cared not, in any other notion, to be apprehended by us; proclaiming himself no otherwise in the Mount, than, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands; forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin; adding only one word, to prevent our too much presumption, "that will by no means clear the guilty," *Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7*: which to do, were a mere contradiction to his justice. Of all other, therefore, God hates most to be robbed of this part of his glory. Neither is the wrong done to God more palpable, than that which is done herein unto ourselves, in barring the gates of heaven upon our souls, in breaking open the gates of hell to take them in, and, in the mean time, striving to make ourselves miserable, whether God will or no. And, surely, as our experience tells us concerning the estate of our bodily indispositions, that there is more frequent sickness in summer, but more deadly in winter, so we find it here: other sins and spiritual distempers are more common, but this distrustful fear and despair of mercy, which chills the soul with a cold horror, is more mortal.

For the remedy whereof, it is requisite that the heart should be thoroughly convinced of the superabundant and ever-ready mercy of the Almighty; of the infallible and unfailable truth of all his gracious engagements; and, in respect of both, be made to confess, that heaven can never be but open to the penitent. It is a sweet word and a true one of St. Bernard, "In thy book, O Lord, are written all that do what they can, though they cannot do what they ought." Neither doth God admit only, but he invites, but he entreats, but he importunes men to be saved. What could he do more, unless he would offer

violence to the will, which were no other than to destroy it, and so to undo the best piece of his own workmanship? It is the way of his decree and proceedings, to dispose of all things sweetly; neither is it more against our nature, than his, to force his own ends; and when he sees that fair means will not prevail to win us from death, he is pleased feelingly to bemoan it, as his own loss; "Why will ye die, O house of Israel?" As for the stable truth of his promises, it is so everlasting, that heaven and earth, in their vanishing, shall leave it standing fast: his title is, "Amen;" and, "Faithful is he, that hath promised, who will also do it." His very essence can no more fail, than his word. He who fears, therefore, that God will be less than his promise, let him fear that God will cease to be himself. It was the motto of that witty and learned Doctor Donne, the late dean of St. Paul's, which I have seen more than once, written in Spanish with his own hand, "Blessed be God, that he is God:" divinely, like himself: as the being of God is the ground of all his blessed ascriptions, so of all our firmitude, safety, consolation; since the veracity and truth of God, as his other holy attributes, are no other than his eternal essence. Fear not, therefore, O thou weak soul, that the Almighty can be wanting to himself in failing thee. He is Jehovah, and his counsels shall stand. Fear and blame thine own wretched infirmities. But the more weak thou art in thyself, be so much the stronger in thy God: by how much more thou art tempted to distrust, cling so much the closer to the Author and Finisher of thy salvation.

Thus, if we shall hold an even course, betwixt security on the one part, and horror and distrust on the other; if the fortified and exalted eyes of our souls, being cleared from all inward and ambient impediments, shall have constantly fixed themselves upon the ever-present majesty of God; not without a spiritual lightness and irradiation, and, therewith, an awful complacency of soul in that glorious sight; and, from thence, shall be cast down upon our own vileness, thoroughly apprehending how much worse than nothing we are, in and of ourselves, in the sight of God; we shall be put into a meet capacity of a holy and well mixed fear. And, if now, our hearts, thus

enlightened, shall be taken up with an inward adoration of the infinite power and greatness of God, manifested in the framing and ordering of this visible world ; and of the infinite goodness and mercy of God, shewed in the marvellous work of man's redemption ; and shall be careful to express this inward worship in all due reverence, upon all occasions, to the name, the word, the services, the house, the messengers of the Almighty ; withal, if our humble souls shall meekly subject and resign themselves over to the good pleasure of God in all things, being ready to receive his fatherly corrections with patience, and his gracious directions with obedience ; lastly, if we shall have settled in our hearts a serious care of being always approved to God in whatsoever actions, and a child-like lothness and dread to give any offence unto so dear and glorious a Majesty ; we shall have attained unto this blessed fear which we seek for ; and be happily freed from that wicked indevotion and profaneness, to which the world is so much and so dangerously subject : which I beseech the God of Heaven to work out in all readers, to his glory in their salvation. Amen.

THE ART
OF
DIVINE MEDITATION
EXEMPLIFIED:

**WITH TWO PATTERNS OF MEDITATION; THE ONE OF
ETERNAL LIFE, THE OTHER OF DEATH.**

CHAPTER I.

The Benefit and Uses of Meditation.

It is not, I suppose, a more bold than profitable labour, after the endeavours of so many contemplative men, to teach the art of meditation; a heavenly business, as any that belongeth either to man or Christian, and such as whereby the soul doth unspeakably benefit itself; for by this do we ransack our deep and false hearts; find out our secret enemies, buckle with them, expel them, arm ourselves against their re-entrance. By this we make use of all good means, fit ourselves to all good duties. By this we descry our weakness, obtain redress, prevent temptations, cheer up our solitariness, temper our occasions of delight, get more light to our knowledge, more heat to our affections, more life to our devotion. By this we grow to be, as we are, strangers upon earth; and, out of a right estimation of all earthly things, into a sweet fruition of invisible comforts. By this we see our Saviour, with Stephen; we talk with God, as Moses; and by this we are ravished, with blessed Paul, into paradise, and see that heaven which we are loth to leave, which we cannot utter. This alone is the remedy of security and worldliness, the pastime of saints, the ladder of heaven, and, in

short, the best improvement of Christianity. Learn it who can, and neglect it who list. He shall never find joy, either in God or in himself, who doth not both know and practise it.

And however of old some hidden cloisters have engrossed it to themselves and confined it within their cells, who, indeed, professing nothing but contemplation, through their immunity from those cares which accompany an active life, might have the best leisure to this business ; yet seeing there is no man so taken up with action, as not sometimes to have a free mind : and there is no reasonable mind so simple, as not to be able both to discourse somewhat and to better itself by her secret thoughts ; I deem it an envious wrong to conceal that from any, the benefit of which may be universal. Those who have but a little stock, had need to know the best rules of thrift.

CHAPTER II.

The Description and Kinds of Meditation.

THE rather for that whereas our divine meditation is nothing else but a bending of the mind upon some spiritual object, through divers forms of discourse, until our thoughts come to an issue. And this must needs be either extemporal and occasioned by outward occurrences offered to the mind ; or deliberate, and wrought out of our own heart ; which again is either in matter of knowledge, for the finding out of some hidden truth and convincing of a heresy by profound traversing of reason ; or in matter of affection, for the enkindling of our love to God. Sending to the schools and masters of controversies, the former of these two, we search after the latter, which is both of larger use, and such as no Christian can reject as either unnecessary or over-difficult : for, both every Christian had need of fire put to his affections, and weaker judgments are no less capable of this divine heat, which proceeds not so much from reason as from faith. One saith, and I believe him, that God's school is more of

affection than understanding: both lessons very needful, very profitable; but, for this age, especially the latter: for if there are some who have much zeal, little knowledge, there are more who have much knowledge, without zeal; and he who hath much skill and no affection, may do good to others by information of judgment, but shall never have thank either of his own heart or of God, who useth not to cast away his love on those, of whom he is only known, not loved.

CHAPTER III.

Concerning Meditation extemporal.

OF extemporal meditation there may be much use, no rule; forasmuch as our conceits herein vary according to the infinite multitude of objects, and their divers manner of proffering themselves to the mind; as also for the suddenness of this act. Man is placed in this stage of the world to view the several natures and actions of the creature; to view them not idly, without his use, as they do him. God made all these for man, and man for his own sake. Both these purposes were lost, if man should let the creature pass carelessly by him, only seen, not thought upon. He only can make benefit of what he sees; which if he do not, it is all one as if he were blind or brute. Whence it is, that wise Solomon putteth the sluggard to school unto the ant, and our Saviour sendeth the distrustful to the lily of the field. Of this kind, was that meditation of the divine psalmist, who, upon the view of the glorious frame of the heavens, was led to wonder at the merciful respect God hath to so poor a creature as man. Thus our Saviour took occasion of the water fetched up solemnly to the altar from the well of Shilo on the day of the great hosannah, to meditate and discourse of the water of life. Thus holy and sweet Augustine, from occasion of the watercourse near to his lodging running among the pebbles, sometimes more silently, sometimes in a baser murmur, and sometimes in a shriller note, entered into the

thought and discourse of that excellent order which God hath settled in all these inferior things. Thus that learned and heavenly soul of our late Estye, when we sat together and heard a sweet concert of music, seemed upon this occasion carried up for the time before-hand to the place of his rest : saying, not without some passion, “ What music may we think there is in heaven ! ” Thus, lastly, (for who knows not that examples of this kind are infinite ?) that faithful and reverend Deering, when the sun shined on his face, now lying on his death-bed, fell into a sweet meditation of the glory of God and his approaching joy. The thoughts of this nature are not only lawful, but so behoveful, that we cannot omit them without neglect of God, his creatures, ourselves. The creatures are half lost, if we only employ them, not learn something of them ; God is wronged, if his creatures be unregarded ; ourselves most of all, if we read this great volume of the creatures, and take out no lesson for our instruction.

CHAPTER IV.

Cautions of extemporal Meditation.

WHEREIN yet caution is to be had, that our meditations be not either too far fetched or savouring of superstition. Far fetched I call those, which have not a fair and easy resemblance to the matter from whence they are raised ; in which case our thoughts prove loose and heartless, making no memorable impression in the mind. They are superstitious, when we make choice of those grounds of meditation, which are forbidden us, as teachers of vanity : or employ our own devices, though well-grounded, to a use above their reach, making them, upon our own pleasures, not only furtherances, but parts of God’s worship ; in both which, our meditations degenerate and grow rather perilous to the soul. Whereto add, that the mind be not too much cloyed with too frequent iteration of the same thought ; which at last breeds a weariness in ourselves, and an unpleasantness of that conceit, which, at the first

entertainment, promised much delight. Our nature is too ready to abuse familiarity in any kind, and it is with meditations, as with medicines, which with over-ordinary use lose their sovereignty, and fill, instead of purging. God hath not straitened us for matter, having given us the scope of the whole world; so that there is no creature, event, action, speech, which may not afford us new matter of meditation, and that which we are wont to say of fine wits, we may as truly affirm of the Christian heart, that it can make use of any thing. Wherefore as travellers in a foreign country make every sight a lesson, so ought we in this our pilgrimage. Thou seest the heaven rolling above thy head in a constant and unmoveable motion; the stars so overlooking one another, that the greatest shew little, the least greatest, all glorious; the air full of the bottles of rain, or fleeces of snow, or divers forms of fiery exhalations; the sea, under one uniform face, full of strange and monstrous shapes beneath: the earth so adorned with variety of plants, that thou canst not but tread on many at once with every foot, besides the store of creatures, that fly about it, walk upon it, live in it. Thou idle truant, dost thou learn nothing of so many masters? Hast thou so long read these capital letters of God's great book, and canst thou not yet spell one word of them? The brute creatures see the same things, with as clear, perhaps better eyes: if thine inward eyes see not their use, as well as thy bodily eyes their shape, I know not whether is more reasonable or less brutish.

CHAPTER V.

Of Meditation deliberate—wherein, I. the QUALITIES OF THE PERSON—of whom is required, 1. that he be pure from his sins.

DELIBERATE meditation is that we chiefly enquire for; which both may be well guided, and will not be a little furthered, by precepts: part whereof the labours of others shall yield us, and part the plainest mistress, experience.

Wherein order requires of us, first, the Qualities of the Person fit for meditation, then the circumstances, manner, and proceedings of the work.

The hill of meditation may not be climbed with a profane foot; but as in the delivery of the law, so here, no beast may touch God's hill, lest he die. Only the pure of heart have promise to see God. Sin dimmeth and dazzleth the eye, that it cannot behold spiritual things. The guard of heavenly soldiers was about Elisha's servant before; he saw them not before through the scales of his infidelity. The soul must therefore be purged, ere it can profitably meditate. And as of old they were wont to search for and thrust out malefactors from the presence, ere they went to sacrifice, so must we our sins, ere we offer our thoughts to God. First, saith David, "I will wash my hands in innocency, then I will compass thine altar." Whereupon, not unfitly, did that worthy chancellor of Paris make the first stair of his ladder of contemplation, humble repentance. The cloth that is white, which is wont to be the colour of innocency, is capable of any dye; the black, of none other. Not that we require an absolute perfection, which, as it is incident unto none, so, if it were, would exclude all need and use of meditation; but rather an honest sincerity of the heart, not willingly sinning, willingly repenting when we have sinned; which whoso finds in himself, let him not think any weakness a lawful bar to meditation. He who pleads this excuse, is like some simple man, who, being half starved with cold, refuseth to come near the fire, because he findeth not heat enough in himself.

CHAPTER VI.

2. That he be free from worldly Thoughts.

NEITHER may the soul that hopeth to profit by meditation, suffer itself, for the time, to be entangled with the world; which is all one as to come to God's flaming bush on the hill of visions, with our shoes on our feet. Thou

seest the bird whose feathers are limed, unable to take her former flight ; so are we unable, when our thoughts are clinged together by the world, to soar up to our heaven in meditation. The pair of brothers must leave their nets, if they will follow Christ ; Elisha his oxen, if he will attend a prophet. It must be a free and a light mind, that can ascend this mount of contemplation, overcoming this height, this steepness. Cares are a heavy load ; and uneasy : these must be laid down at the bottom of this hill, if we ever look to attain the top. Thou art loaded with household cares ; perhaps, public ; I bid thee not cast them away. Even these have their season, which thou canst not omit without impiety. I bid thee lay them down at thy closet door, when thou attemptest this work. Let them in with thee, thou shalt find them troublesome companions, ever distracting thee from thy best errand. Thou wouldest think of heaven, thy barn comes in thy way, or perhaps thy account book, or thy coffers, or, it may be, thy mind is beforehand travelling upon the morrow's journey ; so, while thou thinkest of many things, thou thinkest of nothing ; while thou wouldest go many ways, thou standest still. And as in a crowd, while many press forward at once through one door, none proceedeth ; so when variety of thoughts tumultuously throng in upon the mind, each proveth a bar to the other, and all a hinderance to him that entertains them.

CHAPTER VII.

3. That he be constant, and that in Time and Matter.

AND as our client of meditation must both be pure and free in undertaking this task, so also constant in continuing it ; constant both in time and in matter ; both in a set course and hour reserved for this work, and in a unwearied prosecution of it once begun. Those that meditate by snatches and uncertain fits, only when all other employments forsake them or when good motions are thrust upon them by necessity, let them never hope to

reach to any perfection; for these feeble beginnings of lukewarm grace, which are wrought in them by one fit of serious meditation, are soon extinguished by intermission, and, by miswonting, perish. This day's meal, though large and liberal, strengthens thee not for to-morrow; the body languisheth, if there be not a daily supply of repast. Thus feed thy soul by meditation. Set thine hours and keep them; and yield not to an easy distraction. There is no hardness in this practice, but in the beginning: use shall give it, not ease only, but delight. Thy companion entertaineth thee this while in loving discourses, or some unexpected business offers to interrupt thee; never any good work shall want some hindrance: either break through the lets, except it be with incivility or loss, or, if they be importunate, pay thyself the time that was unseasonably borrowed, and recompense thine omitted hours with the double labours of another day. For thou shalt find, that deferring breeds, beside the loss, an indisposition to good; so that what was before pleasant to thee, being omitted, to-morrow grows harsh; the next day unnecessary; afterward, odious. To day, thou canst, but wilt not; to-morrow, thou couldst, but listest not; the next day thou neither wilt nor canst bend thy mind on these thoughts. So I have seen friends, who, upon neglect of duty, grow overly; upon overliness, strange; upon strangeness, to utter defiance. Those whose very trade is divinity, methinks, should omit no day without its line of meditation; those who are secular men, not many, remembering that they have a common calling of Christianity to attend, as well as a special vocation in the world; and that other, being more noble and important may justly challenge both often and diligent service.

CHAPTER VIII.

2. That he be constant in the Continuance.

AND as this constancy requires thee to keep day with thyself, unless thou wilt prove bankrupt in good exercises,

so also that thy mind should dwell upon the same thought without flitting, without weariness, until it have attained to some issue of spiritual profit; otherwise it attempteth much, effecteth nothing. What availeth it to knock at the door of the heart, if we depart ere we have an answer? What are we the warmer, if we pass hastily along by the hearth and stay not at it? Those who do only travel through Afric, become not blackamoors; but those who are born there, those that inhabit there. We account those damsels too light of their love, who betroth themselves upon the first sight, upon the first motion; and those we deem of much price, who require long and earnest soliciting. He deceiveth himself, that thinketh grace so easily won: there must be much suit and importunity, ere it will yield to our desires. Not that we call for a perpetuity of this labour of meditation: human frailty could never bear so great a toil. Nothing under heaven is capable of a continual motion, without complaint: it is enough for the glorified spirits above to be ever thinking and never weary. The mind of man is of a strange metal; if it be not used, it rusteth; if used hardly, it breaketh; briefly, it is sooner dulled, than satisfied, with a continual meditation. Whence it came to pass that those ancient monks, who intermeddled bodily labour with their contemplations, proved so excellent in this divine business; when those at this day, who, having mewed and mured up themselves from the world, spend themselves wholly upon their beads and crucifix, pretending no other work but meditation, have cold hearts to God, and to the world shew nothing but a dull shadow of devotion: for that, if the thoughts of these latter were as divine as they are superstitious, yet being without all interchangeableness bent upon the same discourse, the mind must needs grow weary, the thoughts remiss and languishing, the objects tedious: while the other refreshed themselves with this wise variety, employing the hands while they called off the mind, as good comedians so mix their parts, that the pleasantness of the one may temper the austereness of the other; whereupon they gained both enough to the body, and to the soul more than if it had been all the while busied. Besides, the excellency

of the object letteth this assiduity of meditation ; which is so glorious, that, like unto the sun, it may abide to have an eye cast upon it for awhile, but will not be gazed upon : whosoever ventureth so far loseth both his hope and his wits. If we hold, with that blessed Monica, that such like cogitations are the food of the mind, yet even the mind also hath her satiety, and may surfeit of too much. It shall be sufficient, therefore, that we persevere in our meditation without any such affectation of perpetuity ; and leave, without a light fickleness ; making always, not our hour glass, but some competent increase of our devotion, the measure of our continuance ; knowing, that, as for heaven, so for our pursuit of grace, it shall avail us little to have begun well, without perseverance : and, withal, that the soul of man is not always in the like disposition, but sometimes is longer in settling, through some unquietness or more obstinate distraction ; sometimes, heavier ; and, sometimes more active and nimble to dispatch. Gerson, whose authority I rather use because our adversaries disclaim him for theirs, professeth he hath been sometimes four hours together working his heart, ere he could frame it to purpose ; a singular pattern of unwearied constancy, of an unconquerable spirit ; whom his present unfitness did not so much discourage, as it whetted him to strive with himself till he could overcome. And, surely, other victories are hazardous ; this, certain, if we will persist to strive. Other fights are upon hope ; this, upon assurance, while our success dependeth upon the promise of God, which cannot disappoint us. Persist therefore, and prevail ; persist, till thou hast prevailed : so that which thou beganest with difficulty, shall end in comfort.

CHAPTER IX.

II. *Of the CIRCUMSTANCES of Meditation—and therein* 1. *of the Place.*

FROM the qualities of the person, we descend towards the

action itself: where, first, we meet with those circumstances which are necessary for our predisposition to the work—place, time, site of the Body.

Solitariness of place is fittest for meditation. Retire thyself from others, if thou wouldest talk profitably with thyself. So Jesus meditates alone in the mount; Isaac, in the fields; John the Baptist, in the desert; David, on his bed; Chrysostom, in the bath; each in several places, but all solitary. There is no place free from God, none to which he is more tied. One finds his closet most convenient, where his eyes, being limited by the known walls, call the mind, after a sort, from wandering abroad; another findeth his soul more free, when it beholdeth the heaven above and about him. It matters not, so we be solitary and silent. It was a witty and divine speech of Bernard, that the spouse of the soul, Christ Jesus, is bashful, neither willingly cometh to his bride in the presence of a multitude. And hence is that sweet invitation which we find of her, “Come, my well beloved, let us go forth into the fields; let us lodge in the villages; let us go up early to the vines; let us see if the vine flourish, whether it hath disclosed the first grape; or whether the pomegranates blossom; there will I give thee my love.” Abandon therefore all worldly society, that thou mayest change it for the company of God and his angels; the society, I say, of the world, not outward only, but inward also. There be many that sequester themselves from the visible company of men, who yet carry a world within them; who being alone in body, are haunted with a throng of fancies; as Jerome, in his wildest desert, found himself too oft in his thoughts amongst the dances of the Roman dames. This company is worse than the other; for it is more possible for some thoughtful men to have a solitary mind in the midst of a market, than for a man thus disposed to be alone in the wilderness. Both companies are enemies to meditations: whither tendeth that ancient counsel of a great master in this art, of three things requisite to this business, secrecy, silence, rest; whereof the first excludeth company; the second, noise; the third, motion. It cannot be spoken how subject we are, in this work, to distraction; like Solomon’s old man, whom the noise of every

bird wakeneth. Sensual delights we are not drawn from with the threefold cords of judgment, but our spiritual pleasures are easily hindered. Make choice therefore of that place which shall admit the fewest occasions of withdrawing thy soul from good thoughts: wherein also even change of places is somewhat prejudicial; and I know not how it falls out, that we find God nearer us in the place where we have been accustomed familiarly to meet him; not for that his presence is confined to one place above others, but that our thoughts are, through custom, more easily gathered to the place where we have ordinarily conversed with him.

CHAPTER X.

2. Of the Time.

ONE time cannot be prescribed to all; for neither is God bound to hours, neither doth the contrary disposition of men agree in one choice of opportunities. The golden hours of the morning some find fittest for meditation, when the body, newly raised, is well calmed with its late rest; and the soul hath not as yet had, from these outward things, any motives of alienation. Others find it best to learn wisdom of their reins in the night, hoping, with Job, that their bed will bring them comfort in their meditation; when, both all other things are still, and themselves, wearied with these earthly cares, do, out of a contempt of them, grow into greater liking and love of heavenly things. I have ever found Isaac's time fittest, who went out in the evening to meditate. No precept, no practice of others can prescribe to us in this circumstance. It shall be enough, that, first, we set ourselves a time; secondly, that we set apart that time wherein we are aptest for this service. And as no time is prejudiced with unfitness, but every day is without difference seasonable for this work, so especially God's day. No day is barren of grace to the searcher of it, none alike fruitful to this; which being by God sanctified to himself, and to be

sanctified by us to God, is privileged with blessings above others, for the plentiful instruction of that day stirreth thee up to this action and fills thee with matter and the zeal of thy public service warmeth thy heart to this other business of devotion. No manna fell to the Israelites on their sabbath: our spiritual manna falleth on ours most frequent. If thou wouldest have a full soul, gather as it falls: gather it by hearing, reading, meditation. Spiritual idleness is a fault this day, perhaps not less than bodily work.

CHAPTER XI.

3. Of the Site and Gesture of the Body.

NEITHER is there less variety in the site and gesture of the body, the due composedness whereof is no little advantage to this exercise. Even in our speech to God, we observe not always one and the same position. Sometimes we fall grovelling on our faces, sometimes we bow our knees, sometimes stand on our feet, sometimes we lift up our hands, sometimes cast down our eyes. God is a spirit, who therefore, being a severe observer of the disposition of the soul, is not scrupulous for the body, requiring not so much that the gesture thereof should be uniform, as reverent. No marvel therefore that in this all our teachers of meditation have commended several positions of body, according to their disposition and practice; one, Gerson, sitting with the face turned up to heaven-ward, according to the precept of the philosopher who taught him, that by sitting and resting the mind gathereth wisdom; another, Guliel. Paris, leaning to some rest, towards the left side, for the greater quieting of the heart; a third, Dionys. Carthus. standing with the eyes lift up to heaven, but shut, for fear of distractions. But, of all other, methinketh, Isaac's choice the best, who meditated walking. In this, let every man be his own master, so be we use that frame of body that may both testify reverence, and, in some cases, help to stir up further devotion; which

also must needs be varied, according to the matter of our meditation. If we think of our sins, Ahab's soft pace, the publican's dejected eyes, and his hand beating his breast, are most seasonable; if of the joys of heaven, Stephen's countenance fixed above, and David's hands lift up on high, are most fitting. In all which, the body, as it is the instrument and vassal of the soul, so will easily follow the affections thereof; and, in truth, then is our devotion most kindly, when the body is thus commanded in its service by the spirit, and not suffered to go before it, and, by its forwardness, to provoke its master to emulation.

CHAPTER XII.

III. *Of the MATTER and SUBJECT of our Meditation.*

Now time and order call us, from these circumstances, to the matter and subject of meditation, which must be divine and spiritual, not evil nor worldly. O the carnal and unprofitable thoughts of men! We all meditate; one, how to do ill to others; another, how to do some earthly good to himself; another, to hurt himself under a colour of good, as how to accomplish his lewd desires, the fulfilling whereof proveth the bane of the soul; how he may sin unseen, and go to hell with the least noise of the world. Or, perhaps, some better minds bend their thoughts upon the search of natural things; the motions of every heaven and of every star; the reason and course of the ebbing and flowing of the sea; the manifold kinds of simples that grow out of the earth, and creatures that creep upon it, with all their strange qualities and operations; or perhaps the several forms of government and rules of state take up their busy heads; so that, while they would be acquainted with the whole world, they are strangers at home, and, while they seek to know all other things, they remain unknown of themselves. The God who made them, the vileness of their nature, the danger of their sins, the multitude of their imperfections, the

Saviour that bought them, the heaven that he bought for them, are, in the mean time, as unknown, as unregarded, as if they were not. Thus do foolish children spend their time and labour in turning over leaves to look for painted babes, not at all respecting the solid matter under their hands. We fools, when will we be wise; and, turning our eyes from vanity, with that sweet singer of Israel, make God's statutes our song and meditation in the house of our pilgrimage? Earthly things proffer themselves with importunity; heavenly things must with importunity be sued to. Those, if they were not so little worth, would not be so forward, and, being forward, need not any meditation to solicit them; these, by how much more hard they are to entreat, by so much more precious they are being obtained, and therefore worthier our endeavour. As then we cannot go amiss, so long as we keep ourselves in the track of divinity, while the soul is taken up with the thoughts either of the Deity in his essence and persons, (sparingly yet in this point, and more in faith and admiration than enquiry) or of his attributes, his justice, power, wisdom, mercy, truth; or of his works, in the creation, preservation, government of all things; according to the psalmist, "I will meditate of the beauty of thy glorious majesty, and thy wonderful works:" so, most directly in our way and best fitting our exercise of meditation, are those matters in divinity, which can most of all work compunction in the heart, and most stir us up to devotion. Of which kind are the meditations concerning Christ Jesus our Mediator, his incarnation, miracles, life, passion, burial, resurrection, ascension, intercession, the benefit of our redemption, the certainty of our election, the graces and proceeding of our sanctification, our glorious estate in paradise lost in our first parents, our present vileness, our inclination to sin, our several actual offences, the temptations and sleights of evil angels, the use of the sacraments, nature and practice of faith and repentance, the miseries of our life with the frailty of it, the certainty and uncertainty of our death, the glory of God's saints above, the awfulness of judgment, the terrors of hell, and the rest of this quality; wherein both it is fit to have variety,

for that even the strongest stomach doth not always delight in one dish, and yet so to change, that our choice may be free from wildness and inconstancy.

CHAPTER XIII.

IV. *The ORDER of the Work itself.*

Now after that we have thus orderly suited the person and his qualities, with the due circumstances of time, place, disposition of body, and substance of the matter discussed, I know not what can remain, besides the main business itself, and the manner and degrees of our prosecution thereof; which, above all other, calleth for an intentive reader and resolute practice. Wherein, that we may avoid all niceness and obscurity, since we strive to profit, we will give direction for the entrance, proceeding, conclusion of this divine work.

CHAPTER XIV.

1. *The ENTRANCE into the Work—(1) the common Entrance, which is Prayer.*

A GOODLY building must shew some magnificence in the gate; and great personages have seemly ushers to go before them, who, by their uncovered heads, command reverence and way.

Even very poets of old had wont, before their ballads, to implore the aid of their gods; and the heathen Romans entered not upon any public civil business, without a solemn appreciation of good success: how much less should a Christian dare to undertake a spiritual work of such importance, not having craved the assistance of his God? which, methinks, is no less, than to profess he could do well without God's leave. When we think evil, it is from ourselves; when good, from God. As prayer is our speech to God, so is each good meditation, according to Bernard, God's speech to the heart: the heart must speak to God, that God may speak to it. Prayer therefore and medita-

tion are as those famous twins in the story, or as two loving turtles, whereof, separate one, the other languisheth. Prayer maketh way for meditation; meditation giveth matter, strength, and life to our prayers; by which, as all other things are sanctified to us, so we are sanctified to all holy things. This is as some royal eunuch to perfume and dress our souls, that they may be fit to converse with the King of heaven. But the prayer that leadeth in meditation should not be long, requiring rather that the extension and length should be put into the vigour and fervency of it; for that is not here intended to be the principal business, but an introduction to another, and no otherwise, than as a portal to this building of meditation. The matter whereof shall be, that the course of our meditation may be guided aright and blessed; that all distractions may be avoided; our judgment enlightened, our inventions quickened, our wills rectified, our affections whetted to heavenly things, our hearts enlarged to God-ward, our devotion enkindled; so that we may find our corruptions abated, our graces thriven, our souls and lives every way bettered by this exercise.

CHAPTER XV.

(2.) Particular and proper Entrance into the Matter, which is in our Choice thereof.

SUCH is the common entrance into this work. There is another yet more particular and proper; wherein the mind, recollecting itself, maketh choice of that theme, or matter, whereupon it will bestow itself for the present; settling itself on that which it hath chosen; which is done by an inward inquisition made into our heart of what we both do and should think upon, rejecting what is inexpedient and unprofitable. In both which, the soul, like unto some noble hawk, lets pass the crows, and larks, and such other worthless birds that cross her way, and stoopeth upon a fowl of price, worthy of her flight: after this manner—

“What wilt thou muse upon, O my soul? Thou seest how little it availeth thee to wander and rove about in un-

certainties. Thou findest how little favour there is in these earthly things, wherewith thou hast wearied thyself. Trouble not thyself any longer, with Martha, about the many needless thoughts of the world: none but heavenly things can afford thee comfort. Up then, my soul, and mind those things that are above, whence thyself art. Amongst all which, whereon shouldest thou rather meditate, than of the life and glory of God's saints? A worthier employment thou canst never find, than to think upon that estate thou shalt once possess, and now desirest."

CHAPTER XVI.

2. *The PROCEEDING of our Meditation—and therein a Method allowed by some Authors rejected by us.*

HITHERTO the entrance; after which our meditation must proceed in due order, not troubledly, not preposterously. It begins in the understanding, endeth in the affection. It begins in the brain, descends to the heart; begins on earth, ascends to heaven, not suddenly, but by certain stairs and degrees till we come to the highest.

I have found a subtle scale of meditation, admired by some professors of this art above all other human devices, and far preferred by them to the best directions of Origen, Austin, Bernard, Hugo, Bonaventure, Gerson, and whosoever hath been reputed of greatest perfection in this skill. The several stairs whereof, lest I should seem to defraud my reader through envy, I would willingly describe, were it not that I feared to scare him rather with the danger of obscurity, from venturing further upon this so worthy a business; yet lest any man perhaps might complain of an unknown loss, my margin shall find room for that which I hold too knotty for my text.* In all which, after the incre-

* The Scale of Meditation of an Author ancient, but nameless.

1. *Degrees of Preparation.*

- 1 Question. What I $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{think?} \\ \text{should think?} \end{array} \right.$

dible commendations of some practitioners, I doubt not but an ordinary reader will easily espy a double fault at the least, darkness and coincidence; that they are both too obscurely delivered, and that divers of them fall into other, not without some vain superfluity. For this part therefore which concerneth the understanding, I would rather require only a deep and firm consideration of the thing propounded; which will be done, if we follow it in our discourse, through all or the principal of those places which natural reason doth afford us. Wherein let no man plead ignorance or fear difficulty. We are all thus far, born logicians; neither is there in this so much need of skill, as of industry. In which course yet we must not be too curious in a precise search of every place and argument, without omission of any, though to be fetched in with racking the invention; for as the mind, if it go loose and without rule, roves to no purpose, so if it be too much fettered with the gieves of strict regularity, moveth nothing at all.

2 Excussion. A repelling of what I should not think.

3 Choice, }
 or }
Election. } Of what most { necessary.
 } } expedient.
 } } comely.

2. *Degrees of Proceeding in the Understanding.*

4 Commemoration. An actual thinking upon the matter elected.

5 Consideration. { A redoubled commemoration of the same,
 } till it be fully known.

6 Attention. { A fixed and earnest consideration, whereby
 } it is fastened in the mind.

7 Explanation. ... { A clearing of the thing considered by simi-
 } litudes.

8 Tractation..... { An extending the thing considered to other
 } points, where all questions of doubts are
 } discussed.

9 Dijudication... { An estimation of the worth of the thing thus
 } handled.

10 Causation..... A confirmation of the estimation thus made.

11 Rumination... { A sad and serious meditation of all the for-
 } mer, till it may work upon the affections.

From hence to the degrees of affection.

CHAPTER XVII.

Premonitions concerning our proceeding in the First Part of Meditation.

BEFORE I enter therefore into any particular tractation, there are three things, whereof I would premonish my reader concerning this first part, which is in the understanding.

First that I desire not to bind every man to the same uniform proceeding in this part. Practice and custom may perhaps have taught other courses, more familiar, and not less direct. If then we can, by any other method, work in our hearts so deep an apprehension of the matter meditated, as it may duly stir the affections, it is that only we require.

Secondly, that whosoever applieth himself to this direction, think himself not necessarily tied to the prosecution of all those logical places which he findeth in the sequel of our treatise, so as his meditation should be lame and imperfect without the whole number; for there are some themes which will not bear all these: as when we meditate of God, there is no room for causes or comparisons, and others yield them with such difficulty, that their search interrupteth the chief work intended. It will be sufficient, if we take the most pregnant and most voluntary.

Thirdly, that when we stick in the disposition of any of the places following, (as if, meditating of sin, I cannot readily meet with the material and formal causes, or the appendances of it) we rack not our minds too much with the enquiry thereof; which were to strive more for logic, than devotion; but, without too much disturbance of our thoughts, quietly pass over to the text. If we break our teeth with the shell, we shall find small pleasure in the kernel.

Now then, for that my only fear is lest this part of my discourse shall seem over-perplexed unto the unlearned reader, I will, in this whole process, second my rule with its example, that so what might seem obscure in the one,

may by the other be explained; and the same steps he seeth me take in this, he may accordingly tread in any other theme.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Practice of Meditation, wherein, 1. we begin with some description of that we meditate of.

FIRST therefore it will be expedient to consider seriously *what* the thing is whereof we meditate.

“What then, O my soul, is *the Life of the Saints*, whereof thou studieth? Who are the saints, but those who having been weakly holy upon earth, are perfectly holy above? who, even on earth, were perfectly holy in their Saviour: now, are so in themselves? who, overcoming on earth, are truly canonized in heaven? What is their life, but that blessed estate above, wherein their glorified soul hath a full fruition of God?”

CHAPTER XIX.

2. An easy and voluntary Division of the Matter meditated.

THE nature whereof after we have thus shadowed out to ourselves by a description, not curious always and exactly framed according to the rules of art, but sufficient for our own conceit; the next is, if it shall seem needful or if the matter will bear or offer it, some easy and voluntary division, whereby our thoughts shall have more room made for them, and our proceeding shall be more distinct.

“There is a life of nature, when thou, my soul, dwellest in this body and informest thine earthly burden; there is a life of grace, when the Spirit of God dwells in thee; there is a life of glory, when, the body being united to

thee, both shall be united to God, or when, in the mean time, being separated from thy companion, thou enjoyest God alone. This life of thine therefore, as the other hath its ages, hath its statures; for it entereth upon its birth, when thou passeth out of thy body, and changest this earthly house for a heavenly; it enters into its full vigour, when, at the day of the common resurrection, thou resumest this thy companion, unlike to itself, like to thee, like to thy Saviour, immortal now and glorious. In this life there may be degrees, there can be no imperfection. If some be like the sky, others like the stars, yet all shine. If some sit at their Saviour's right-hand, others at his left, yet all are blessed. If some vessels hold more, all are full. None complaineth of want, none envieth him that hath more."

CHAPTER XX.

3. *A Consideration of the Causes thereof, in all Kinds of them.*

WHICH done, it shall be requisite for our more perfect understanding, and for laying grounds of matter for our affection, to carry it thugh those other principal places and heads of reason, w^h nature hath taught every man, both for knowledge and amplification: the first whereof are the causes of all s^s.

"Whence is this et^{er}nal life, but from him who only is eternal? who only is a fountain of life, yea, life itself? Who, but the same G^d that gives our temporal life, giveth also that eternal? The Father bestoweth it, the Son meriteth it, the Holy Gst sealeth and applieth it. Expect it only from him, O soul, whose free election gave thee the first title to it, be purchased by the blood of thy Saviour; for thou art not therefore be happy, because he saw that thou w^{ldst} be good; but therefore art thou good, because he h^{ath} ordained thou shalt be happy. He hath ordained thee life; he hath given thee a Saviour to give this life unto thee; faith, whereby thou mightest at-

tain to this Saviour; his word, by which thou mightest attain to this faith; what is there in this, not his? And yet not his so simply, as that it is without thee; without thy merit indeed, not without thine act. Thou livest here, through his blessing, but by bread: thou shalt live above through his mercy; but by thy faith below, apprehending the author of thy life. And, yet as he will not save thee without thy faith, so thou canst never have faith without his gift. Look to him therefore, O my soul, as the beginner and finisher of thy salvation; and while thou magnifiest the Author, be ravished with the glory of the work, which far passeth both the tongue of angels and the heart of man. It can be no good thing that is not there. How can they want water, that have the spring? Where God is enjoyed, in whom only all things are good, what good can be wanting? And what perfection of bliss is there, where all goodness is met and united! "In thy presence is fullness of joy; and at thy righthand are pleasures for evermore." O blessed reflection of glory! We see there, as we are seen. In that we are seen, it is our glory: in that we see, it is God's glory: therefore doth he glorify us, that our glory should be his. How worthy art thou, O Lord, that, through us, thou shouldst look at thyself!"

CHAPTER XXI.

4. *The Consideration of the Fruits and Effects.*

THE next place shall be the fruit and effects following upon their several causes; which also afford very feeling and copious matter to our meditation; wherein it shall be ever best, not so much to seek for all, as to choose out the chief.

"No marvel then, if from this glory proceed unspeakable joy; and from this joy, the sweet songs of praise and thanksgiving. The Spirit bids us, when we are merry, sing; how much more then, when we are merry without all mixture of sorrow, beyond all measure of our earthly affections, shall we sing joyful hallelujahs and hosannahs

to him that dwelleth in the highest heavens! Our hearts shall be so full, that we cannot choose but sing, and we cannot but sing melodiously. There is no jar in this music, no end of this song. O blessed change of the saints! They do nothing but weep below, and now nothing but sing above. We sowed in tears, we reap in joy. There was some comfort in those tears, when they were at the worst: but there is no danger of complaint in this heavenly mirth. If we cannot sing here with angels, "On earth peace;" yet there we shall sing with them, "Glory to God on high;" and, joining our voices to theirs, shall make up that celestial concert, which none can either hear or bear part in, and not be happy."

CHAPTER XXII.

5. Consideration of the Subject wherein or whereabout it is.

AFTER which comes to be considered the subject, either wherein that is, or whereabout that is employed, which we meditate of; as—

"And, indeed, what less happiness doth the very place promise, wherein this glory is exhibited, which is no other than the paradise of God? Here below we dwell, or rather we wander, in a continued wilderness; there we shall rest us in the true Eden; "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse." Kings use not to dwell in cottages of clay, but in royal courts fit for their estate; how much more shall the king of heaven, who hath prepared for men so fair mansions on earth, make himself a habitation suitable to his majesty! Even earthly princes have dwelt in cedar and ivory; but the great city, holy Jerusalem, the palace of the Highest, hath her walls of jasper, her building of gold, her foundation of precious stones, her gates of pearl. "How glorious things are spoken of thee, O thou city of God!" We see but the pavement, and yet how goodly it is! The believing Centurion thought himself unworthy that Christ should come under his roof; yet wert thou, O Saviour, in thine humbled estate, in the

form of a servant ; how then shall I think myself worthy to come under this roof of thine, so shining and glorious ? O if this clay of mine may come to this honour above, let it be trampled upon and despised on earth."

CHAPTER XXIII.

6. Consideration of the Appendances and Qualities of it.

SIXTHLY shall follow the appendances and qualities, which cleave unto the subject, whereof we meditate ; as—

" But were the place less noble and majestical, yet the company which it affordeth, hath enough to make the soul blessed ; for, not the place giveth ornament to the guest, so much as the guest to the place. How loth are we to leave this earth, only for the society of some few friends in whom we delight, which yet are subject every day to mutual dislikes ! What pleasure shall we then take in the enjoying of the saints, when there is nothing in them not amiable, nothing in us that may cool the fervour of our love ! There shalt thou, my soul, thyself glorified, meet with thy dear parents and friends alike glorious, never to be severed. There thou shalt see and converse with those ancient worthies of the former world, the blessed patriarchs and prophets, with the crowned martyrs and confessors, with the holy apostles, and the fathers of that primitive and this present church, shining each one according to the measure of his blessed labours. There shalt thou live familiarly in the sight of those angels, whom now thou receivest good from, but seest not. There, which is the head of all thy felicity, thine eyes shall see him whom now thy heart longeth for, that Saviour of thine, in the only hope of whom now thou livest. Alas, how dimly and afar off dost thou now behold him ! How imperfectly dost thou enjoy him, while every temptation bereaves thee, for the time, of his presence ! " I sought him whom my soul loveth ; I sought him, but found him not." His back is now towards thee many times through thy sins, and therefore thou hardly

discernest him. Otherwhile and often thy back is turned unto him through negligence, that, when thou mightest obscurely see him, thou dost not. Now thou shalt see him, and thine eyes, thus fixed, shall not be removed. Yet neither could this glory make us happy, if, being thus absolute, it were not perpetual. To be happy is not so sweet a state, as it is miserable to have been happy. Lest aught therefore should be wanting, behold, this felicity knoweth no end, feareth no intermission, and is as eternal for the continuance, as he that had no beginning. O blessedness truly infinite! Our earthly joys do scarcely ever begin, but, when they begin, their end bordereth upon their beginning; one hour seeth us oftentimes joyful and miserable: here alone is nothing but eternity. If then the divine prophet thought one day here in God's earthly house better than a thousand elsewhere, what shall I compare to thousands of millions of years in God's heavenly temple? Yea, millions of years are not so much as a minute to eternity; and that other house not a cottage to this."

CHAPTER XXIV.

7. Of that which is diverse from it or contrary to it.

SEVENTHLY, our thoughts, leaving a while the consideration of the thing as it is in itself, shall descend unto it as respectively with others; and therefore shall first meditate of that which is diverse from it, or contrary unto it.

"What dost thou here then, O my soul? What dost thou here, grovelling upon earth, where the best things are vanity, the rest no better than vexation? Look round about thee, and see whether thine eyes can meet with any thing, but either sins or miseries. Those few and short pleasures thou seest, end ever sorrowfully, and, in the mean time, are intermingled with many grievances. Here thou hearest one cry out of a sick body, whereof there is no part which affords not choice of diseases: this man layeth his hand upon his consuming lungs and complain-

eth of short wind ; that other, upon his rising spleen ; a third shaketh his painful head ; another roars out for the torment of his reins or bladder ; another, for the racking of his gouty joints : one is distempered with a watery dropsy ; another, with a windy colic ; a third, with a fiery ague ; a fourth, with an earthen melancholy : one grovels and foameth with the falling sickness ; another lieth bedrid, half senseless with a dead palsy : there are but few bodies, that complain not of some disease ; and, that thou mayest not look far, it is a wonder if thyself feel not always one of these evils within thee. There thou hearest another lament his loss : either his estate is impaired by suretyship, or stealth, or shipwreck, or oppression ; or his child his unruly, or miscarried ; or his wife dead, or disloyal : another tormented with passions : each one is some way miserable. But that which is yet more irksome, thy one ear is beaten with cursings and blasphemies ; thy other, with scornful, or wanton, or murdering speeches : thine eyes see nothing but pride, filthiness, profaneness, blood, excess, and whatsoever else might vex a righteous soul ; and, if all the world besides were innocent, thou findest enough within thyself to make thyself weary, and thy life loathsome. Thou needest not fetch cause of complaint from others ; thy corruptions yield thee too much at home ; ever sinning, ever presuming ; sinning, even when thou hast repented ; yea, even while thou repentest, sinning. Go to now, my soul, and solace thyself here below ; and suffer thyself to be besotted with these goodly contentments, worthy of no better, while thou fixest thyself on these. See if thou canst find any of these above ; and, if thou canst meet with any distemper, any loss, any sin, any complaint, from thyself or any other above, despise thy heaven, as much as now thou lovest the earth. Or if all this cannot enough commend unto thee the state of heavenly glory, cast down thine eyes yet lower into that deep and bottomless pit, full of horror, full of torment ; where there is nothing but flames, and tears, and shrieks, and gnashing of teeth ; nothing but fiends, and tortures ; where there is palpable darkness, and yet perpetual fire ; where the damned are ever boiling, never consumed ; ever dying, never dead ; ever complaining,

never pitied; where the glutton, that once would not give a crust of bread, now begs for one drop of water, and yet, alas, if whole rivers of water should fall into his mouth, how should they quench those rivers of brimstone that feed this flame? where there is no intermission of complaints, no breathing from pain, and, after millions of years, no possibility of comfort. And if the rod wherewith thou chastisest thy children, O Lord, even in this life, be so smart and galling, that they have been brought down to the brim of despair, and, in the bitterness of their soul, have entreated death to release them; what shall I think of their plagues, in whose righteous confusion thou consultest, and sayest, “Aha, I will avenge me of mine enemies?” Even that thou shalt not be thus miserable, O my soul, is some kind of happiness; but that thou shalt be as happy, as the reprobate are miserable, how worthy is it of more estimation, than thyself is capable of!”

CHAPTER XXV.

8. *Of Comparisons and Similitudes whereby it may be most fitly set forth.*

AFTER this opposition, the mind shall make comparison of the matter meditated with what may nearest resemble it; and shall illustrate it with fittest similitudes, which give no small light to the understanding, nor less force to the affection.

“Wonder then, O my soul, as much as thou canst, at this glory; and, in comparison thereof, contemn this earth which now thou treadest upon; whose joys, if they were perfect, are but short, and, if they were long, are imperfect. One day, when thou art above, looking down from the height of thy glory and seeing the sons of men creeping like so many ants on this mole-hill of earth, thou shalt think, ‘Alas, how basely I once lived! Was yonder silly dungeon the place I so loved, and was so loth to leave?’ Think so now beforehand; and since of heaven thou canst not, yet account of the earth, as it is worthy.

How heartless and irksome are ye, O ye best earthly pleasures, if ye be matched with the least of those above ! How vile are you, O ye sumptuous buildings of kings, even if all the entrails of the earth had agreed to enrich you, in comparison of this frame not made with hands ! It is not so high above the earth in distance of place, as in worth and majesty. We may see the face of heaven from the heart of the earth, but from the nearest part of the earth, who can see the least glory of heaven ? The three disciples, on mount Tabor, saw but a glimpse of this glory shining upon the face of their Saviour, and yet, being ravished with the sight, cried out, " Master, it is good to be here," and, thinking of building three tabernacles, (for Christ, Moses, Elias,) could have been content themselves to have lain without shelter, so that they might always have enjoyed that sight. Alas, how could earthly tabernacles have fitted those heavenly bodies ? They knew what they saw ; what they said, they knew not. Lo, these three disciples were not transfigured, yet how deeply they were affected even with the glory of others ! How happy shall we be, when ourselves shall be changed into glorious, and shall have tabernacles, not of our own making, but prepared for us by God ! And yet not tabernacles, but eternal mansions. Moses saw God but a while, and shined ; how shall we shine, that shall behold his face for ever ! What greater honour is there, than in sovereignty ? What greater pleasure, than in feasting ? This life is both a kingdom and a feast—a kingdom ; " He that overcometh shall rule the nations ; and shall sit with me in my throne : " O blessed promotion ! O large dominion and royal seat, to which Solomon's throne of ivory was not worthy to become a footstool—a feast ; " Blessed are they, that are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb." Feasts have more than necessity of provision, more than ordinary diet ; but marriage-feasts yet more than common abundance ; but the marriage-feast of the Son of God to his blessed spouse, the church, must so far exceed in all heavenly munificence and variety, as the persons are of the greater state and majesty : there is new wine, pure manna, and all manner of spiritual dainties ; and, with the continual cheer, a sweet and answerable welcome : while the

Bridegroom lovingly cheereth us up, "Eat, O friends, drink, and make you merry, O well beloved." Yea, there shalt thou be, my soul, not a guest, but, how unworthy soever, the bride herself whom he hath everlastingly espoused to himself in truth and righteousness. The contract is passed here below; the marriage is consummate above, and solemnized with a perpetual feast; so that now thou mayest safely say, "My well-beloved is mine, and I am his. Wherefore hearken, O my soul, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people and thy father's house," thy supposed home of this world: "so shall the King have pleasure in thy beauty; for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him."

CHAPTER XXVI.

9. *The Titles and Names of the Thing considered.*

THE very names and titles of the matter considered, yield no small store to our meditation; which, being commonly so imposed that they secretly comprehend the nature of the thing which they represent, are not unworthy of our discourse.

"What need I seek those resemblances, when the very name of Life implieth sweetness to men on earth, even to them who confess to live with some discontentment? Surely the light is a pleasant thing; and it is good to the eyes to see the sun;" yet, when Temporal is added to Life, I know not how this addition detracteth something, and doth greatly abate the pleasure of life; for those who joy to think of life, grieve to think it but temporal; so vexing is the end of that whose continuance was delightful. But now, when here is an addition, above time, of eternity, it maketh life so much more sweet as it is more lasting; and, lasting infinitely, what can it give less than an infinite contentment? O dying and false life which we enjoy here, and scarcely a shadow and counterfeit of that other! What is more esteemed than glory, which is so precious to men of spirit, that it makes them prodigal of their blood, proud

of their wounds, careless of themselves? and yet, alas, how pent and how fading is this glory, effected with such dangers and death! hardly, after all trophies and monuments, either known to the next sea, or surviving him that dieth for it! It is true glory to triumph in heaven, where is neither envy nor forgetfulness. What is more dear to us than our country, which the worthy and faithful patriots of all times have respected above their parents, their children, their lives; counting it only happy to live in it, and to die for it? The banished man pines for the want of it; the traveller digesteth all the tediousness of his way, all the sorrows of an ill journey, in the only hope of home, forgetting all his foreign miseries, when he feeleth his own smoke. Where is our country, but above? Thence thou camest, O my soul; thither thou art going in a short, but weary pilgrimage. O miserable men, if we account ourselves at home in our pilgrimage; if, in our journey, we long not for home! Dost thou see men so in love with their native soil, that even when it is all deformed with the desolations of war and turned into rude heaps, or while it is even now flaming with the fire of civil broils, they covet yet still to live in it, preferring it to all other places of more peace and pleasure? And shalt thou, seeing nothing but peace and blessedness at home, nothing but trouble abroad, content thyself with a faint wish of thy dissolution? If heaven were thy gaol, thou couldest but think of it uncomfortably. O what affection can be worthy of such a home?"

CHAPTER XXVII.

10. *Consideration of fit Testimonies of Scripture concerning our Theme.*

LASTLY, if we can recall any pregnant testimonies of scripture concerning our theme, those shall fitly conclude this part of our meditation—of scripture, for that in these matters of God, none but divine authority can command assent and settle the conscience. Witnesses of holy men

may serve for colours, and the ground must be only from God.

“There it is,” saith the Spirit of God which cannot deceive thee, “that all tears shall be wiped from our eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain:” yea, there shall not only be an end of sorrows, but an abundant recompense for the sorrows of our life; as he that was rapt up into the third heaven, and there saw what cannot be spoken, speaketh yet thus of what he saw, “I reckon, that the afflictions of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” It was shewed unto him, what should hereafter be shewed unto us; and he saw, that if all the world full of miseries were laid in one balance, and the least glory of heaven in another, those would be incomparably light, yea, as a divine father says, that one day’s felicity above were worth a thousand years’ torment below. What then can be matched with the eternity of such joys? “O how great, therefore, is this thy goodness, O Lord, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; and done to them that trust in thee, before the sons of men!”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Of our SECOND PART of Meditation, which is in the Affections—wherein is required, 1. a Taste and Relish of what we have thought upon.

THE most difficult and knotty part of meditation thus finished, there remaineth that which is both more lively and more easy unto a good heart, to be wrought altogether by the affections; which if our discourses reach not unto, they prove vain and to no purpose. That which followeth therefore, is the very soul of meditation, whereto all that is past serveth but as an instrument. A man is a man by his understanding part, but he is a Christian by his will and affections.

Seeing therefore that all our former labour of the brain is

only to affect the heart, after that the mind hath thus traversed the point proposed through all the heads of reason, it shall endeavour to find, in the first place, some feeling touch and sweet relish in that which it hath thus chewed ; which fruit, through the blessing of God, will voluntarily follow upon a serious meditation. David saith, “ O taste and see how gracious the Lord is.” In meditation we do both see and taste, but we see before we taste. Sight is of the understanding ; taste, of the affections. Neither can we see, but we must taste ; we cannot know aright, but we must needs be affected. Let the heart therefore first conceive and feel in itself the sweetness or bitterness of the matter meditated ; which is never done without some passion, nor expressed without some hearty exclamation :

“ O blessed estate of the saints ! O glory not to be expressed, even by those who are glorified ! O incomprehensible salvation ! What savour hath this earth to thee ? Who can regard the world, that believeth thee ? Who can think of thee, and not be ravished with wonder and desire ? Who can hope for thee, and not rejoice ? Who can know thee, and not be swallowed up with admiration at the mercy of him that bestoweth thee ? O blessedness, worthy of Christ’s blood to purchase thee ! worthy of the continual songs of saints and angels to celebrate thee ! How should I magnify thee ! How should I long for thee ! How should I hate all this world for thee ! ”

CHAPTER XXIX.

2 *A Complaint, bewailing our Wants and Untowardness.*

AFTER this taste shall follow a complaint, wherein the heart bewaileth to itself its own poverty, dulness, and imperfection ; chiding and abasing itself, in respect of its wants and indisposition : wherein humiliation truly goeth before glory, for the more we are cast down in our conceit, the higher shall God lift us up at the end of this exercise in spiritual rejoicing.

“ But, alas, where is my love ? where is my longing ?

Where art thou, O my soul? What heaviness hath overtaken thee? How hath the world bewitched and possessed thee, that thou art become so careless of thy home, so senseless of spiritual delights, so fond upon these vanities? Dost thou doubt whether there be a heaven? or whether thou have a God and a Saviour there? O far be from thee this atheism! far be from thee the least thought of this desperate impiety. Woe were thee, if thou believedst not! But, O thou of little faith, dost thou believe there is happiness, and happiness for thee, and desirest it not and delightest not in it? Alas, how weak and unbelieving is thy belief! how cold and faint are thy desires! Tell me what such goodly entertainment hast thou met withal here on earth, that was worthy to withdraw thee from these heavenly joys? What pleasure in it ever gave thee contentment? or what cause of dislike findest thou above? O no, my soul; it is only thy miserable drowsiness, only thy security: the world, the world hath besotted thee, hath undone thee with carelessness. Alas, if thy delight be so cold, what difference is there in thee from an ignorant heathen that doubts of another life? yea, from an Epicurean that denies it? Art thou a Christian, or art thou none? If thou be what thou professest, away with this dull and senseless worldliness; away with this earthly uncheerfulness. Shake off at last this profane and godless security that hath thus long weighed thee down from mounting up to thy joys. Look up to thy God and to thy crown; and say with confidence, "O Lord, I have waited for thy salvation."

CHAPTER XXX.

3. A hearty Wish of the Soul for what it complaineth to want.

AFTER this complaint, must succeed a hearty and passionate wish of the soul, which ariseth clearly from the two former degrees; for that which a man hath found sweet and comfortable, and complains that he still wanteth, he cannot but wish to enjoy.

"O Lord, that I could wait and long for thy salvation!

O that I could mind the things above! that, as I am a stranger indeed, so I could be also in affection! O that mine eyes, like the eyes of thy first martyr, could, by the light of faith, see but a glimpse of heaven! O that my heart could be rapt up thither in desire! How should I trample upon these poor vanities of the earth! How willingly should I endure all sorrows, all torments! How scornfully should I pass by all pleasures! How should I be in travail of my dissolution! O when shall that blessed day come, when, all this wretched worldliness removed, I shall solace myself in my God? “Behold, as the hart panteth for the rivers of waters, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God; even for the living God. O when shall I come and appear before the presence of God?”

CHAPTER XXXI.

4. An humble Confession of our Disability to effect what we wish.

~~After~~ this wishing, shall follow humble confession, by just order of nature: for, having bemoaned our want and wished supply, not finding this hope in ourselves, we must needs acknowledge it to him of whom only we may both seek and find. Where it is to be duly observed, how the mind is, by turns, depressed and lifted up; being lifted up with our estate of joy, it is cast down with complaint; lift up with wishes, it is cast down with confession: which order doth best hold it in pure and just temper, and maketh it more feeling of the comfort which followeth in the conclusion. This confession must derogate all from ourselves, and ascribe all to God.

“Thus I desire, O Lord to be rightly affected towards thee and thy glory. I desire to come to thee, but, alas, how weakly! how heartlessly! Thou knowest that I can neither come to thee nor desire to come, but from thee. It is nature that holds me from thee. This treacherous nature favoureth itself, loveth the world, hateth to think

of a dissolution, and chooseth rather to dwell in this dungeon with continual sorrow and complaint, than to endure a parting, although to liberty and joy. Alas, Lord, it is my misery, that I love my pain. How long shall these vanities thus besot me? It is thou only that canst turn away mine eyes from regarding these follies, and my heart from affecting them : thou only, who, as thou shalt one day receive my soul into heaven, so now beforehand canst fix my soul upon heaven and thee."

CHAPTER XXXII.

5. An earnest Petition for that which we confess to want.

AFTER confession naturally follows petition, earnestly requesting that at his hands, which we acknowledge ourselves unable, and none but God able, to perform.

" O carry it up therefore, thou that hast created and redeemed it, carry it up to thy glory ! O let me not always be thus dull and brutish ; let not these scales of earthly affection always dim and blind mine eyes ! O thou that layedst clay upon the blind man's eyes, take away this clay from mine eyes ; wherewith, alas, they are so daubed up, that they cannot see heaven. Illuminate them from above, and " in thy light let me see light." O thou that hast prepared a place for my soul, prepare my soul for that place ; prepare it with holiness : prepare it with desire ; and even while it sojourneth on earth, let it dwell in heaven with thee, beholding ever the beauty of thy face, the glory of thy saints and of itself."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

6. A vehement Enforcement of our Petition.

AFTER petition will follow the enforcement of our request, from argument and importunate obsecration ; wherein we

must take heed of complimenting in terms with God, as knowing that he will not be mocked by any fashionable form of suit, but requireth holy and feeling entreaty.

“How graciously hast thou proclaimed to the world, that whoever wants wisdom shall ask it of thee, who neither deniest nor upbraidest ! O Lord, I want heavenly wisdom to conceive aright of heaven. I want it, and ask it of thee. Give me to ask it instantly ; and give it me, according to thy promise, abundantly. Thou seest it is no strange favour that I beg of thee, no other than that which thou hast richly bestowed upon all thy valiant martyrs, confessors, servants, from the beginning ; who never could have so cheerfully embraced death and torment, if, through the midst of their flames and pain, they had not seen their crown of glory. The poor thief on the cross had no sooner craved thy remembrance when thou camest to thy kingdom, than thou promisedst to take him with thee into heaven. Presence was better to him, than remembrance. Behold, now thou art in thy kingdom ; I am on earth ; remember thine unworthy servant, and let my soul in conceit, in affection, in conversation, be this day and for ever with thee in paradise. I see that “man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain ;” they are pitiful pleasures he enjoyeth, while he forgetteth thee. I am as vain ; make me more wise. O let me see heaven ; and I know, I shall never envy, nor follow them ! “My times are in thy hand :” I am no better than my fathers ; a stranger on earth. As I speak of them, so the next, yea this generation shall speak of me, as one that was. My life is a bubble, a smoke, a shadow, a thought : I know there is no abiding in this thoroughfare. O suffer me not to be so mad, as while I pass on the way, I should forget the end ! It is that other life that I must trust to. With thee it is, that I shall continue. O let me not be so foolish, as to settle myself on what I must leave, and to neglect eternity. I have seen enough of this earth, and yet I love it too much. O let me see heaven, another while ; and love it so much more than the earth, by how much the things there are more worthy to be loved. O God, look down on thy wretched pilgrim and teach me to look up to thee, and to see thy goodness in the land of the

living. Thou that boughtest heaven for me, guide me thither; and, for the price that it cost thee, for thy mercies' sake, in spite of all temptations, enlighten thou my soul, direct it, crown it."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

7. A cheerful Confidence of obtaining what we have requested and enforced.

AFTER this enforcement doth follow confidence, wherein the soul, after many doubtful and unquiet bickerings, gathereth up her forces, and cheerfully rouseth up itself; and, like one of David's worthies, breaketh through a whole army of doubts, and fetcheth comfort from the well of life, which, though in some later, yet in all is a sure reward from God of sincere meditation.

"Yea, be thou bold, O my soul; and do not merely crave, but challenge this favour of God, as that which he oweth thee. He oweth it thee, because he hath promised it, and, by his mercy, hath made his gift his debt. "Faithful is he that hath promised, who also will do it." Hath he not given thee not only his hand in the sweet hopes of the Gospel, but his seal also in the sacraments? Yea, besides promise, hand, seal, hath he not given thee a sure earnest of thy salvation in some weak, but true graces? Yet more, hath he not given thee, besides earnest, possession; while he that is "the truth and the life," saith, "He that believeth, hath everlasting life, and is passed from death unto life?" Canst thou not then be content to cast thyself upon this blessed issue—if God be merciful, I am glorious. I have thee already, O my life. God is faithful, and I do believe. "Who shall separate me from the love of Christ?" from my glory with Christ? Who shall pull me out of my heaven? Go to then, and "return to thy rest, O my soul?" make use of that heaven, wherein thou art, and be happy."

Thus we have found, that our meditation, like the wind, gathereth strength in proceeding; and, as natural bodies,

the nearer they come to their places, move with more celerity, so doth the soul, in this course of meditation, to the unspeakable benefit of itself.

CHAPTER XXXV.

The CONCLUSION of our Meditation, in what Order it must be—1. with Thanksgiving.

THE conclusion remaineth, wherein we must advise, like as physicians do in their sweats and exercise, that we cease not over-suddenly, but leave off by little and little. The mind must not be suffered to fall headlong from this height, but must also descend by degrees.

The first whereof, after our confidence, shall be a hearty gratulation and thanksgiving; for as man naturally cannot be miserable, but he must complain and crave remedy, so the good heart cannot find itself happy, and not be thankful; and this thankfulness which it feeleth and expresseth, maketh it yet more good, and affecteth it more.

“What shall I then do to thee for this mercy, O thou Saviour of men? What should I render to my Lord for all his benefits? Alas, what can I give thee, which is not thine own before? O that I could give thee but all thine! Thou givest me to drink of this cup of salvation; “I will therefore take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. Bless thou the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name.” And, since here thou beginnest thy heaven, begin here also that joyful song of thanksgiving, which there thou shalt sing more sweetly, and never end.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

2. With Recommendation of our Souls and Ways to God.

AFTER this thanksgiving shall follow a faithful recom-

mendation of ourselves to God ; wherein the soul doth cheerfully give up itself, and repose itself wholly upon her Maker and her Redeemer ; committing herself to him in all her ways ; submitting herself to him in all his ways ; desiring, in all things, to glorify him, and to walk worthy of her high and glorious calling.

Both which latter will be done, as I have ever found, with much life and comfort, if, for the full conclusion, we lift up our heart and voice to God, in singing some versicle of David's divine psalms, answerable to our disposition and matter ; whereby the heart closes up itself with much sweetness and contentment.

This course of meditation, thus heartily observed, let him that practiseth tell me, whether he find not that his soul, which at the beginning of this exercise did but creep and grovel upon earth, do not now in the conclusion soar aloft into heaven ; and, being before afar off, do not now find itself near to God, yea, with him and in him.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

An Epilogue, reproving the Neglect and exhorting to the Use of Meditation.

THUS have I endeavoured, according to my slender faculty, to prescribe a method of meditation, not upon such strict terms of necessity, that whosoever goeth not my way, erreth. Divers paths lead oftentimes to the same end, and every man aboundeth in his own sense. If experience and custom have made another form familiar to any man, I forbid it not ; as that learned father said of his translation, " Let him use his own, not condemn mine." If any man be to choose and begin, let him practise mine till he meet with a better master. If another course may be better, I am sure this is good. Neither is it to be suffered, that, like as fantastical men, while they doubt what fashioned suit they should wear, put on nothing ; so that we Christians should neglect the matter of this worthy business, while we nicely stand upon the form thereof.

Wherein give me leave to complain, with just sorrow and shame, that if there be any Christian duty the omission of which is notoriously shameful and prejudicial to the souls of professors, it is this of meditation. This is the very end God hath given us our souls for: we mis-spend them, if we use them not thus. How lamentable is it, that we so employ them, as if our faculty of discourse served for nothing but our earthly provision! as if our reasonable and Christian minds were appointed for the slaves and drudges of this body, only to be the caters and cooks of our appetite!

The world filleth us, yea, cloyeth us. We find ourselves work enough to think, What have I yet? How may I get more? What must I lay out? What shall I leave for posterity? How may I prevent the wrong of mine adversary? How may I return it? What answer shall I make to such allegations? What entertainment shall I give to such friends? What courses shall I take in such suits? In what pastime shall I spend this day? in what the next? What advantage shall I reap by this practice? what loss? What was said? answered? replied? done? followed? Goodly thoughts and fit for spiritual minds! Say were there no other world, how could we spend our cares otherwise? Unto this only neglect, let me ascribe the commonness of that Laodicean temper of men, or, if that be worse, of the dead coldness which hath stricken the hearts of many, having left them nothing but the bodies of men and vizors of Christians; to this only let me ascribe it, *they have not meditated*. It is not more impossible to live without a heart, than to be devout without meditation. Would God therefore my words could be in this, as the wise man saith the words of the wise are, like unto goads in the sides of every reader, to quicken him up out of this dull and lazy security to a cheerful practice of this divine meditation. Let him curse me on his death-bed, if, looking back from thence to the bestowing of his former times, he acknowledge not these hours passed the most happily in his whole life; if he then wish not he had worn out more days, in so profitable and heavenly a work.

A

MEDITATION OF DEATH

ACCORDING TO THE FOREGOING RULES.

THE ENTRANCE.—And now, my soul, that thou hast thought of the end, what can fit thee better than to think of the way? And though the forepart of the way to heaven be a good life, the latter and more immediate is death. Shall I call it the way, or the gate of life? Sure I am, that by it only we pass into that blessedness, whereof we have so thought, that we have found it cannot be thought of enough.

THE DESCRIPTION.—What then is this death, but the taking down of these sticks, whereof this earthly tent is composed? the separation of two great and old friends, till they meet again? the gaol-delivery of a long prisoner? our journey into that other world, for which we and this thoroughfare were made? our payment of our first debt to nature? the sleep of the body, and the awakening of the soul?

THE DIVISION.—But, lest thou shouldest seem to flatter him, whose name and face hath ever seemed terrible to others, remember that there are more deaths than one. If the first death be not so fearful as he is made, his horror lying more in the conceit of the beholder than in his own aspect, surely the second is not made so fearful as he is. No living eye can behold the terrors thereof. It is as impossible to see them, as to feel them, and live. Nothing, but a name, is common to both. The first hath men, casualties, diseases, for his executioners; the second, devils. The power of the first is in the grave; the second, in hell. The worst of the first, is senselessness; the easiest of the second, is a perpetual

sense of all the pain that can make a man exquisitely miserable.

THE CAUSES.—Thou shalt have no business, O my soul, with the second death: thy first resurrection hath secured thee. Thank him that hath redeemed thee, for thy safety. And how can I thank thee enough, O my Saviour, who hast so mercifully bought off my torment, with thy own; and hast drunk off that bitter potion of thy Father's wrath, whereof the very taste had been our death? Yea, such is thy mercy, O thou Redeemer of men, that thou hast not only subdued the second death, but reconciled the first; so that thy children taste not at all of the second, and find the first so sweetened to them by thee, that they complain not of bitterness. It was not thou, O God, that madest death; our hands are they that were guilty of this evil. Thou sawest all thy work, that it was good; we brought forth sin, and sin brought forth death. To the discharge of thy justice and mercy, we acknowledge this miserable conception; and needs must that child be ugly, that hath such parents. Certainly, if being and good be, as they are, of an equal extent, then the dissolution of our being must needs, in itself, be evil. How full of darkness and horror then is the privation of this vital light, especially since thy wisdom intended it to be the revenge of sin, which is no less than the violation of an infinite justice! It was thy just pleasure to plague us with this brood of our own begetting. Behold, that death which was not till then in the world, is now in every thing. One great conqueror finds it in a slate; another finds it in a fly: one finds it in the kernel of a grape; another, in the prick of a thorn: one, in the taste of a herb; another, in the smell of a flower: one, in a bit of meat; another, in a mouthful of air: one, in the very sight of a danger; another, in the conceit of what might have been. Nothing, in all our life, is too little to hide death under it. There needs no cords, nor knives, nor swords, nor pieces; we have made ourselves as many ways of death, as there are helps of living. But if we were the authors of our death, it was thou that didst alter it. Our disobedience made it, and thy mercy made it not to be evil. It had been all one to thee, to

have taken away the very being of death from thine own, but thou thoughtest it best to take away the sting of it only ; as good physicians, when they would apply their leeches, scour them with salt and nettles, and, when their corrupt blood is voided, employ them to the health of the patient. It is more glory to thee, that thou hast removed enmity from this Esau ; that now he meets us with kisses, instead of frowns ; and, if we receive a blow from this rough hand, yet that very stripe is healing. O how much more powerful is thy death than our sin ! O my Saviour how hast thou perfumed and softened this bed of my grave, by dying ! How can it grieve me, to tread in thy steps to glory ?

THE EFFECTS.—Our sin made death our last enemy ; thy goodness hath made it the first friend that we meet with in our passage to another world ; for as she that receives us from the knees of our mother in our first entrance to the light, washeth, cleanseth, dresseth us, and presents us to the breast of our nurse or the arms of our mother, challenges some interest in us when we come to our growth ; so death, which in our passage to that other life is the first that receives and presents our naked soul to the hands of those angels who carry it up to her glory, cannot but think this office friendly and meritorious. What, if this guide lead my carcase through corruption and rottenness, when my soul in the very instant of her separation knows itself happy ? What, if my friends mourn about my bed and coffin, when my soul sees the smiling face and loving embracements of him that was dead and is alive ? What care I who shuts these earthen eyes, when death opens the eye of my soul to see as I am seen ? What, if my name be forgotten of men, when I live above with the God of spirits ?

THE SUBJECT.—If death would be still an enemy, it is the worst part of me that he hath any thing to do withal. The best is above his reach, and gains more than the other can lose. The worst piece of the horror of death is the grave : and, set aside infidelity, what so great misery is this ? That part which is corrupted, feels it not ; that which is free from corruption, feels an abundant recompence, and foresees a joyful reparation. What is here

but a just restitution? We carry heaven and earth wrapt up in our bosoms; each part returns homeward: and if the exceeding glory of heaven cannot countervail the dolesomeness of the grave, what do I believing? but if the beauty of that celestial sanctuary do more than equalize the horror of the bottomless pit, how can I shrink at earth like myself, when I know my glory? And, if examples can move thee any whit, look behind thee, O my soul, and see which of the worthies of that ancient latter world, which of the patriarchs, kings, prophets, apostles, have not trod in these red steps. Where are those millions of generations which have hitherto peopled the earth? How many passing-bells hast thou heard for thy known friends! How many sick beds hast thou visited! How many eyes hast thou seen closed! How many vain men hast thou seen, that have gone into the field to seek death, in hope to find an honour as foolish as themselves! How many poor creatures hast thou mulcted with death for thine own pleasure! And canst thou hope that God will make a by-way and a postern for thee alone, that thou mayest pass to the next world, not by the gates of death, not by the bottom of the grave?

THE ADJUNCT.—What then dost thou fear, O my soul? There are but two stages of death, the bed and the grave: this latter, if it have senselessness, yet it hath rest; the former, if it have pain, yet it hath speediness, and, when it lights upon a faithful heart, meets with many and strong antidotes of comfort. The evil that is ever in motion, is not fearful; that which both time and eternity finds standing where it was, is worthy of terror. Well may those tremble at death, who find more distress within than without, whose consciences are more sick and nearer to death, than their bodies. It was thy father's wrath that did so terrify thy soul, O my Saviour, that it put thy body into a bloody sweat. The mention and thought of thy death ended in a psalm, but this began in an agony. Then didst thou sweat out my fears. The power of that agony doth more comfort all thine, than the angels could comfort thee. That very voice deserved an eternal separation of horror from death, where thou saidst, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Thou hadst not

complained of being left, if thou wouldest have any of thine left destitute of comfort in their parting. I know not whom I can fear, while I know whom I have believed. How can I be discouraged with the sight of my loss, when I see so clear an advantage?

THE CONTRARY.—What discomfort is this, to leave a frail body, to be joined unto a glorious head? to forsake vain pleasures, false honours, bootless hopes, unsatisfying wealth, stormy contentments, sinful men, perilous temptations, a sea of troubles, a galley of servitude, an evil world, and a consuming life; for freedom, rest, happiness, eternity? And if thou wert sentenced, O my soul, to live a thousand years in this body with these infirmities, how wouldst thou be weary, not of being only, but of complaining: while, ere the first hundred I should be a child; ere the second, a beast; a stone, ere the third; and therefore should be so far from finding pleasure in my continuance, that I should not have sense enough left to feel myself miserable! And, when I am once gone, what difference is there betwixt the most aged of the first patriarchs and me, and the child that did but live to be born, save only in what was? and that which was, is not. And if this body had no weakness to make my life tedious, yet what a torment is it, that, while I live, I must sin! Alas, my soul, every one of thy known sins is not a disease, but a death. What an enemy art thou to thyself, if thou canst not be content, that one bodily death should excuse thee from many spiritual! to cast off thy body, that thou mayest be stripped of the rags, yea, the fetters of thy sin, and clothed with the robes of glory. Yet these terms are too hard. Thou shalt not be cast off, O my body; rather, thou shalt be put to making. This change is no less happy for thee than for thy partner. This very skin of thine, which is now tawney and wrinkled shall once shine; this earth shall be heaven; this dust shall be glorious. These eyes that are now weary of being witnesses of thy sins and miseries, shall then never be weary of seeing the beauty of thy Saviour, and thine own in his. These ears that have now been tormented with the impious tongues of men, shall first hear the voice of the Son of God, and then the voices of saints and

angels, in their songs of hallelujah. And this tongue, that now complains of miseries and fears, shall then bear a part in that divine harmony.

THE COMPARISON.—In the mean time, thou shalt but sleep in this bed of earth. He that hath tried the worst of death, hath called it no worse. Very heathens have termed them cousins; and it is no unusual thing for cousins of blood to carry both the same names and features. Hast thou wont, O my body, when the day hath wearied thee, to lie down not unwillingly to thy rest? Behold in this sleep there is more quietness, more pleasure of visions, more certainty of waking, more cheerfulness in rising. Why then art thou loth to think of laying off thy rags, and reposing thyself? Why art thou, like a child, unwilling to go to bed? Hast thou ever seen any bird, which, when the cage hath been opened, would rather sit still and sing within her grates, than fly forth unto her freedom in the woods? Hast thou ever seen any prisoner in love with his bolts and fetters? Did the chief of the apostles, when the angel of God shined in his gaol, and struck him on the side, and loosed his two chains, and bade him arise quickly, and opened both the wooden and iron gate, say, ‘What, so soon? yet a little sleep?’ What madness had it been, rather to slumber betwixt his two keepers, than to follow the angel of God into liberty? Hast thou ever seen any mariner that hath saluted the sea with songs, and the haven with tears? What shall I say to this diffidence, O my soul, that thou art unwilling to think of rest after thy toil, of freedom after thy durance, of the haven after an unquiet and tempestuous passage? How many are there, that seek death, and cannot find it, merely out of the irksomeness of life. Hath it found thee, and offered thee better conditions, not of immunity from evils, but of possession of more good than thou canst think; and wouldst thou now fly from happiness to be rid of it?

THE NAMES.—What, is it a name that troubles thee? What if men would call sleep, death; wouldst thou be afraid to close thine eyes? What hurt is it then, if he that sent the first sleep upon man, whilst he made him a helper, send this last and soundest sleep upon me, while

he prepares my soul for a glorious spouse to himself? It is but a parting, which we call death; as two friends, when they have led each other on the way, shake hands till they return from their journey. If either could miscarry, there were cause of sorrow. Now they are more sure of a meeting, than of a parting, what folly is it not to be content to redeem the unspeakable gain of so dear a friend, with a little intermission of enjoying him! He will return laden with the riches of heaven, and will fetch his old partner to the participation of this glorious wealth. Go then, my soul, to this sure and gainful traffic, and leave my other half in a harbour as safe, though not so blessed; yet so shalt thou be separated, that my very dust shall be united to thee still, and to my Saviour in thee.

THE TESTIMONIES.—Wert thou unwilling, at the command of thy Creator, to join thyself at the first with this body of mine? Why art thou then loth to part with that which thou hast found, though entire, yet troublesome? Dost thou not hear Solomon say, “The day of death is better than the day of thy birth?” Dost thou not believe him? or art thou in love with the worse, and displeased with the better? If any man could have found a life worthy to be preferred unto death, so great a king must needs have done it; now on his very throne, he commends his coffin. Yea, what wilt thou say to those heathens, that mourned at the birth, and feasted at the death of their children? They knew the miseries of living, as well as thou; the happiness of dying they could not know; and if they rejoiced out of a conceit of ceasing to be miserable, how shouldst thou cheer thyself in an expectation, yea, an assurance, of being happy! He that is the Lord of Life, and tried what it was to die, hath proclaimed them blessed that die in the Lord. Those are blessed, I know, that live in him, but they rest not from their labours. Toil and sorrow are between them, and a perfect enjoying of that blessedness which they now possess only in hope and inchoation; when death hath added rest, their happiness is finished.

THE TASTE OF OUR MEDITATION.—O death, how sweet is that rest wherewith thou refreshest the weary

pilgrims of this vale of mortality ! How pleasant is thy face to those eyes that have acquainted themselves with the sight of it, which to strangers is grim and ghastly ! How worthy art thou to be welcome unto those that know whence thou art, and whither thou tendest ! Who that knows thee, can fear thee ? Who that is not all nature, would rather hide himself among the baggage of this vile life, than follow thee to a crown ? What indifferent judge, that should see life painted over with vain semblances of pleasures, attended with troops of sorrows on the one side, and on the other with uncertainty of continuance and certainty of dissolution ; and then should turn his eyes unto death, and see her black but comely, attended on the one hand with a momentary pain, with eternity of glory on the other ; would not say out of choice, that which the prophet said out of passion, “ It is better for me to die than to live ? ”

THE COMPLAINT.—But, O my soul, what ails thee to be thus suddenly backward and fearful ? No heart hath more freely discoursed of death in speculation ; no tongue hath more extolled it in absence. And now that it is come to thy bed’s side, and hath drawn thy curtains, and takes thee by the hand, and offers thee service, thou shrinkest inward, and, by the paleness of thy face and wildness of thine eye, bewrayest an amazement at the presence of such a guest. That face which was so familiar to thy thoughts, is now unwelcome to thine eyes. I am ashamed of this weak irresolution. Whitherto have tended all thy serious meditations ? What hath Christianity done to thee, if thy fears be still heathenish ? Is this thine imitation of so many worthy saints of God, whom thou hast seen entertain the most violent deaths with smiles and songs ? Is this the fruit of thy long and frequent instruction ? Didst thou think death would have been content with words ? Didst thou hope it would suffice thee to talk, while all others suffer ? Where is thy faith ? yea, where art thou thyself, O my soul ? Is heaven worthy of no more thanks, no more joy ? shall heretics, shall pagans give death a better welcome than thou ? Hath thy Maker, thy Redeemer, sent for thee, and art thou loth to go ? Hath he sent for thee to put thee

in possession of that glorious inheritance which thy wardship hath cheerfully expected, and art thou loth to go? Hath God, with this sergeant of his, sent his angels to fetch thee, and art thou loth to go? Rouse up thyself for shame, O my soul; and if ever thou hast truly believed, shake off this unchristian diffidence, and address thyself joyfully for thy glory.

THE WISH.—Yea, O my Lord, it is thou that must raise up this faint and drooping heart of mine. Thou only canst rid me of this weak and cowardly distrust. Thou that sendest for my soul, canst prepare it for thyself. Thou only canst make thy messenger welcome to me. O that I could but see thy face through death! O that I could see death, not as it was, but as thou hast made it! O that I could heartily pledge thee, my Saviour, in this cup, that so I might drink new wine with thee, in thy Father's kingdom!

THE CONFESSION.—But, alas, O my God, nature is strong and weak in me at once. I cannot wish to welcome death, as it is worthy. When I look for most courage, I find strongest temptations. I see and confess, that when I am myself, thou hast no such coward as I am. Let me alone, and I shall shame that name of thine which I have professed: every secure worldling shall laugh at my feebleness. O God, were thy martyrs thus haled to their stakes? Might they not have been loosed from their racks, and chose to die in those torments? Let it be no shame, for thy servant to take up that complaint, which thou madest of thy better attendants, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

THE PETITION AND ENFORCEMENT.—O thou God of spirits, that hast coupled these two together, unite them in a desire of their dissolution. Weaken this flesh to receive, and encourage this spirit either to desire or to condemn, death; and now, as I grow nearer to my home, let me increase in the sense of my joys. I am thine; save me, O Lord. It was thou that didst put such courage into thine ancient and late witnesses, that they either invited or challenged death, and held their persecutors their best friends, for letting them loose from these gieves of flesh. I know thy hand is not shortened; neither any

of them hath received more proofs of thy former mercies. O let thy goodness enable me to reach them, in the comfortable steadiness of my passage! Do but draw this veil a little, that I may see my glory, and I cannot but be enflamed with the desire of it. It was not I that either made this body for the earth, or this soul for my body, or this heaven for my soul, or this glory of heaven, or this entrance into glory: all is thine own work. O perfect what thou hast begun, that thy praise and my happiness may be consummate at once.

THE ASSURANCE OR CONFIDENCE.—Yea, O my soul, why needest thou wish the God of mercies to be tender of his own honour? Art thou not a member of that body, whereof thy Saviour is the head? Canst thou drown, when thy head is above? Was it not for thee, that he triumphed over death? Is there any fear in a foiled adversary? O my Redeemer, I have already overcome in thee; how can I miscarry in myself? O my soul, thou hast marched valiantly! Behold, the damsels of that heavenly Jerusalem come forth with timbrels and harps to meet thee, and to applaud thy success; and now there remains nothing for thee but “a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give thee, at that day. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”

THE THANKSGIVING.—“Return now unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully unto thee. O Lord God, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle. O my God and King, I will extol thee, and will bless thy Name for ever and ever. I will bless thee daily, and praise thy Name for ever and ever. Great is the Lord, and most worthy to be praised, and his greatness is incomprehensible. I will meditate of the beauty of thy glorious majesty, and thy wonderful works. Hosanna, thou that dwellest in the highest heavens.” Amen.

SONGS IN THE NIGHT.

SECTION I.

WHEN thou saidst, O Saviour, "The night cometh when no man can work," thou didst not mean to exclude the work of thy praise. There is no time, wherein that can be unseasonable : yea, rather, as all our artificial melody is wont to sound sweetest in the dark, so those songs are most pleasing to thee, which we sing in the saddest night of our affliction.

O God, it is easy for those whose "bones thou hast filled with marrow," to be cheerful ; but to make "the bones which thou hast broken," to rejoice, is doubtless the praise of thy mercy. It was the charge of thy blessed apostle, that if any man be afflicted, he should pray ; if merry, he should sing psalms ; and this, doubtless, is the ordinary temper of a Christian soul ; but if a man can be so affected, as to pray fervently in the height of his mirth, and to sing cheerfully in the depth of his affliction, he can be no other than eminent in grace, and strongly wrought upon by the God of all comfort.

It is a true saying of Elihu, "Thou only, O God, our maker, art he that givest songs in the night." The night is a dismal season, attended with solitude and horror ; and an aggravation of those pains and cares, whereof the day is, in any sort, guilty. The light, besides a natural cheeriness, may afford some diversions of sorrow ; and present us with such objects and occurrences, as may somewhat allay the sensibleness of our grief ; but the night takes part with our misery, and adds no little to our discomfort. Songs in the night therefore are not, cannot be of nature's making ; but are the sole gift of the heavenly Comforter.

And if we, out of the strength of our moral powers, shall be setting songs to ourselves in the night of our utmost disconsolation, woe is me, how miserably out of tune they are ! How harsh, how mis-accented, how discordant even to the sense of our own souls ! much more in the ears of thee the Almighty, in whom dwells nothing beneath an infinite-perfection !

But the songs that thou, O God, puttest into the mouths of thy servants in the night of their tribulation, are so exquisitely harmonious, as that thine angels rejoice to hear them, and disdain not to match them with their hallelujahs in heaven.

— Could there be a more gloomy night, than that which thy servants Paul and Silas spent in the gaol of Thyatira ? Prisons are, at the best, darksome ; it being one part of the punishment of offenders, to be debarred of the benefit of the light. But this, to make it more sad, was the inner prison, the dungeon of that woeful gaol ; where yet they are not allowed the liberty either to move or stand, but have their hands manacled, and their feet fast locked in the stocks. There lay thy two precious servants in little ease ; their backs smarting with their late merciless stripes ; their legs galled with their pinching restraint ; when, in their midnight, thou gavest them songs of such sweetness and power, that the very earth and the stones of their prison did move, and as it were, dance at that melody : the doors fly open ; the fetters fall off ; the keeper trembles ; the whole house is filled with affright and amazement. The fellow-prisoners, whose durance had been inured to nothing but sighs and moans, wondered to hear such music in their cold cells at midnight ; but when they felt their irons shaken off, and the bolts burst, and the doors seeming to invite them to a sudden liberty, how were they astonished to think of the power of that heavenly charm which had wrought so miraculous a change.

Neither was it otherwise with the rest of those blessed messengers of the glad tidings of salvation. What other was it than the night of persecution with Peter and the other apostles, when they were scourged for preaching the gospel of peace ? How pleasing songs didst thou give them in

this night of their pain ! Neither were their backs more full of wales, than their mouths of laughter, for “ they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame ” for the name of Jesus, Acts v. 44.

And as all these are animated by one and the same spirit, what other was the disposition and carriage of all those glorious martyrs and confessors of all times, which sealed the truth of the gospel with their blood ? When the night was darkest, their songs were sweetest. Even when tyranny had wearied itself with their torments, their exultations were at the highest. Never have there been more heavenly ditties, than those which have been sung at the stake : neither hath any man gone with more joy to his wedding, than these holy souls have gone to meet their Saviour in those flames.

Neither may we think, that the melody of these nightly songs hath been only reserved for these evangelical worthies ; but the same divine notes have been put into the mouths of all God’s saints in all ages of his church. The distresses of all the darlings of God upon earth have still been thus alleviated with the divine strains of spiritual comfort.

Such were the songs of Noah, when, from the close prison of the ark, he descended to the altar, offering a cheerful sacrifice to his God in the praise of his gracious preservation. Such was Jacob’s upon his hard night’s lodging in Bethel. Such was Joseph’s in Pharaoh’s gaol. Such was Moses’s, more than once in the desert. Such was Jonah’s in “ the belly of hell,” as he styles the loathsome gorge of the dreadful sea-monster.

But, above all, the sweet singer of Israel must pass for the most glorious pattern, not only of the sacred music of the day, but of songs also in the night. Those heavenly composures of his represent him to us as never void either of troubles or gratulations ; yea, of cheerful gratulations, in the midst of his troubles. Do I hear him passionately bewailing his heavy condition, “ My soul is sore troubled ; I am weary of my groaning : every night wash I my bed with my tears ? ” Ps. vi. 3, 6. Lo, whilst I am ready to pity his hopeless distress, and to say, ‘ Alas, what will

become of this woeful soul? comfort breaks forth from heaven; and the next breath triumphs over the insults of his enemies, and cheers him up with a confident assurance of mercy; "Away from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping." It was no small pang of discomfort, that made him say, "Thou didst turn away thy face from me, and I was troubled," Ps. xxx. 7. Lo, this was David's night, when the sun of heavenly consolation was withdrawn from him. Will you hear his song in this night? "Lord, thou hast turned my mourning into dancing; thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness." The case may seem to have been much worse with him, when he cried out, "Thy hand is heavy upon me day and night, and my moisture is like the drought of summer," Ps. xxxii. 4: but in the darkest night of his sorrow, his song is loud and cheerful; "Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Be glad, ye righteous, and rejoice in the Lord; and be joyful, all ye that are true of heart." What was it other than night with him, when he complains of being neglected of the Highest? "How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?" Ps. xiii. 1; and what merrier note could there be, than that which he instantly sings? "But my trust is in thy mercy, and my heart is joyful in thy salvation. I will sing of the Lord, because he hath dealt so bountifully with me!" Lastly, for nothing were more easy than to trace the footsteps of the holy psalmist through all his heavenly ditties, no night could be equally dark to that wherein he cries out, "The snares of death compassed me round about, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me," Ps. cxvi. 3: no song could be sweeter than "Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful. I was in misery, and he helped me. Turn again to thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee: for thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling."

But why do I instance in these singular patterns of a holy cheerfulness under affliction, when the chosen vessel ranks it amongst the gracious dispositions of the faithful

soul? "Not only so," saith he to his Roman converts, "but we glory in tribulation also," Rom. v. 3. And his fellow apostle no less sweetly seconds him; "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations," James i. 2.

Lo, these divine oracles do not tell us of joy after our sorrows and afflictions: this were no news to God's children in this vale of tears: "Weeping may endure for a night," saith the psalmist, "joy cometh in the morning," Ps. xxx. 5: but they speak of joy in the very brunt of our sufferings; as if they laid before us Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego singing in the midst of their flames.

This is a temper of the soul, not more excellent, than hard to be attained. We all aspire towards it: not many reach up to it. To be patient under a heavy cross, is no small praise; to be contented, is more; but, to be cheerful, is the highest pitch of Christian fortitude. Not to send forth the juice of sorrow, such is our tears, when we are hard pressed, is manly; but to smile upon torture, and to sing when others shriek, is no less than heroical.

There is, I confess, no little advantage this way in the difference of constitutions; whereof some are more soft and melting, others more hardy and obdurate: some are naturally more malleable to afflictions, others more waxen to all impressions of grief. Wise Seneca observed some, in his time, who took a kind of pride and contentment in being slashed and mangled; whereas others, but for a box on the ear, are ready to cry out "Murder." The valiant Goths held it a perpetual shame for one of their sword-men to wink in receiving a wound; whereas a delicate Sybarite complains, that the rose-leaves lie doubled under his back.

But as weak hearts do commonly break under heavy afflictions, so the strongest will find it difficult enough not to buckle under the weight of some crosses: but to go lightly and nimbly away with the most pressing load of this kind, is more than a merely human strength can perform. Neither would the Holy Ghost have appropriated to himself the title of "Comforter," and "the God of all comfort," if any mortal power could be able to do this great work without him; John xiv. 26; 2 Cor. i. 3; Isa. li. 12.

SECTION II.

THE Holy Spirit then, as being a most free agent, is sometimes pleased immediately to cast into the soul the comfortable gleams of heavenly consolations; but, ordinarily, he causeth this gracious cheerfulness in the heart of believers, by working them to strong resolutions, grounded upon powerful and irrefragable motives—such as are fetched from the author, the intention, the nature, the issue of our affliction.

SECTION III.

THE Temanite said well, “Affliction cometh not forth of the dust; neither doth trouble spring out of the ground,” Job v. 6. It is not of so base an original as earth, but derives itself from heaven, even from the Father of all mercies. That great and holy God, who is most justly jealous of his own honour, will not lose the glory of working and managing the far greater part of human occurrences: since the contentments that we can hope for, are not the tythe of those miseries which we must look to meet with in this our earthly pilgrimage. This right, therefore, the Almighty wholly challengeth to himself; “I make peace and create evil: I, the Lord, do all these things,” Isa. xlv. 7. “Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?” saith the prophet, Amos iii. 6.

Why then do I not thus argue with myself in my sufferings? ‘Is it not the hand of my good God, that lies thus heavy upon me? Can I but acknowledge him to be a God of infinite wisdom and infinite mercy? If of infinite wisdom, how can he but know what is best for me? If of infinite mercy, how can he but do what he knows to be best? And if it be best for me to suffer, why should I not be cheerful in suffering? What do I looking to second hands? This man, that beast; this fever, that tempest; this fire, that inundation, are but his rods: the hand is his that wields them. Their malignity is their own: nothing but goodness proceeds from him, that useth them to my

advantage. "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good," 1 Sam. iii. 18. If but as a creature, O God, thou hast full right to dispose of me as thou wilt; I am thy clay, fashion me as thou pleasest: but, as thy redeemed one, as thine adopted one, I have full and dear interest in thee as a Father, and thou canst be no other than thyself. Let it not be enough for me to hold my peace, because thou, Lord, hast done it; but let me break silence in praising thy name, for that "thou in very faithfulness hast afflicted me," Ps. cxix. 75. The fathers of our flesh, even though they whip us unduly and out of passion, yet we kneel to their persons, and cling to their knees, and kiss their rods; how much more should I adore thine infinite goodness in all thy holy, righteous, merciful corrections! It is for a slave to grudge at the scourges of a cruel master: he is not worthy to pass for thy child, who receives not thy stripes with a reverent meekness. Tears may be here allowed, but a reluctant frown were no better than rebellion. Let infidels then and ignorants, who think they suffer by chance, and impute all their crosses to the next hand, looking no higher than their own heads, repine at their adversities and be dejected with their afflictions: for me, who know that I have a Father in heaven, full of mercy and compassion, whose providence hath measured out to a scruple the due proportions of my sorrows, counting my sighs and reserving the tears which he wrings from me in his bottle; why do I not patiently lie down, and put my mouth in the dust, meekly submitting to his holy pleasure, and blessing the hand from which I smart.'

SECTION IV.

THE intent of the agent must needs work a great difference, in our construction of the act.

An enemy, we know, strikes with an intention to wound, and kill: no father means to maim his child, in beating him; his tender heart is far from intending any bodily hurt to the fruit of his loins. The surgeon and the executioner do both the same act; both cut off the limb;

but the one, to save a patient; the other, to punish an offender.

O Father of mercies, since it is thou that strikest me, I know thou canst have no other thoughts but of love and compassion to my soul. O thou heavenly Physician, if thou hast decreed me to be blooded or cauterized, I know it cannot be but for my health: and if, for my bodily cure, I do not only admit of these painful remedies, but reward them, how should I bless thee for this beneficial pain thou puttest me to for my spiritual and eternal welfare! What an unthankful wretch shall I be, if I be not more sensible of thy favour, than of my own complaint!

Thus much of thy will, O God, hast thou revealed to us, as to let us know, that all thine intentions in the afflictions of thy chosen ones, have respect either to thyself or to them—to thyself, in the glory that redounds to thy name in their sustentation and deliverance; to them, whether for their trial or their bettering.

1. Thine Israel, O God, had never endured so hard a bondage under Pharaoh, as to be over-sweltered in the Egyptian furnaces, to be laden with merciless stripes, to be stinted unto impossible tasks, had it not been to magnify thy Almighty power in supporting them against the rage of tyranny; and revenging their wrongs upon their oppressors, by miraculous plagues and an unexampled destruction.

When thy disciples, O Saviour, upon the sight of the poor blind-born beggar, took the boldness to ask thee who had sinned, “this man or his parents, that he was born blind,” it pleased thee to return them this quick answer, “Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him,” John ix. 3. Surely the event justified thy words. All the eyes of the beholders of this poor dark soul did not win so much glory to thee, as this man’s want of eyes so omnipotently supplied by thy divine power. Restoring of sight was nothing in comparison of creating it! nature and art have that; none but the God of nature could effect this. No doubt, this now-seeing beggar could not but bless thee for his blindness, that gave thee occasion of shewing this miraculous proof of thy Deity; and applauded his own

happiness, in being made the subject of so convincing a miracle.

Had not Lazarus sickened, and died, and smelt of the grave, where had been the glory which accrued to thee by his resuscitation? Had not Daniel lodged in the lion's den, and the three children taken possession of the fiery furnace, where had been the glory of their admired preservation?

Most just it is then, O Lord, that thine eye should be most upon thine honour in our suffering; and just cause have we to rejoice and sing to thy praise, if thou have vouchsafed to make us, in any sort, examples of thy power and mercy.

2. But, withal, it pleases thee, in the intentions of our afflictions, to cast some glances of respect upon us thy weak servants upon earth.

(1.) For our trial and probation.

How remarkable a proof whereof hast thou given us in that great pattern of patience, who had never been brought forth into the theatre of the world to encounter with so prodigious calamities, had it not been to make good his challenged integrity! It was thy pleasure, in a holy kind of gloriation, to assert the sincerity of that gracious servant of thine. The envious spirit, as impatient of so much goodness to be found in man, maliciously traduces that piety as mercenary; thou, who knowest what grace thou hadst given him, yieldest to have it put to the test. The probation is, beyond all example, painful, but glorious. Job pays dear for the conviction of that lying spirit. His innocence and truth triumph over malice, shame the adversary, win honour to thy name, and render him a rare and memorable example of mercy.

What are heresies, but the spiritual distempers of the church, the bane of religion, flashes of hell or breaking out for disturbance and destruction? Yet there "must be heresies," saith the apostle to his Corinthians, "that those which are approved, may be made manifest among you," 1 Cor. xi. 19. Lo, if there were no falsehood, truth would want much of her lustre: and, if there were no enemy, what place would there be for victory?

Goodness is so conscious of its own worth and pureness,

that it rejoiceth to be tried home. Hence it is that the man after God's own heart makes it his earnest suit to his God, "Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart; for thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes, and I have walked in thy truth," Ps. xxvi. 2, 3.

There is much forgery in the world, neither is there any virtue under heaven whereof there are not many counterfeits. Hypocrisy makes a more glorious shew, than the truest piety; and many a real saint is branded with simulation.

The most wise God knows how to discover the true state of all hearts, by affliction. Every face thus appears in its own hue; and then no marvel if the sincere and upright soul rejoice to have her truth and innocence gloriously vindicated, and made conspicuous to all eyes: "That the trial of" her "faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. i. 7.

(2.) But the far more excellent and gracious drift of our afflictions, is the bettering of our souls.

He that could say, "Remember David and all his troubles," could also say, "It is good for me, that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes," Ps. cxix. 71.

Well therefore did the angel that spake to Daniel, put these two together, telling him that those persecutions which should befall God's people, should "try them, and purge them, and make them white," Dan. xi. 35; according to that which the Lord speaks by his Prophet Zechariah, "I will bring the third part through the fire; and will refine them, as silver is refined; and will try them, as gold is tried; they shall call upon my name, and I will hear them," Zech. xiii. 9.

How justly then doth the apostle profess to glory in tribulation; as knowing, "that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed!" Rom. v. 3—5.

O the sweet and happy fruit of affliction! Who would not welcome that pain of body, which works health to the soul? that loss of goods or temporal estate, which enriches the soul? that trouble and disquiet, which brings a sweet peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost?

How many have we seen, who with Jeshurun, have “waxed fat, and kicked” against the Almighty in the pampered time of their prosperity; who, in the time of their trouble, have, with broken hearts and bended knees, sought their God and found him to their unspeakable comfort! How many, who have been fast galloping towards hell in the lawless course of their wilful sins, have, in the midst of their career, been stopped by the hand of a good God through a sudden affliction!

O the indulgent strokes of a gracious God, who whips us here, “that we should not be condemned with the world!” “Let the righteous” God “thus smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head,” Ps. cxli. 5.

SECTION V.

ACCORDING to the merciful intentions of the Almighty, thus healing and sovereign is affliction in the very nature of it, to all God’s dear ones upon earth; as being only a fatherly chastisement, not a severe punishment, wherever it falls. Even then therefore, when he seems to frown upon them, he comes to them, not with a sword in his hand, but with a rod; not for his own revenge, but for their emendation.

The best of us is deeply sin-sick. This bitter potion is it, that can only purge out all our peccant humours, and restore us to that good temper of spiritual health, wherein we may comfortably enjoy God and ourselves. We all, as vessels of impure metal, through long security and disuse of holy duties, have contracted much rust; it is the gentle fire of seasonable affliction, that must cleanse us, and make us fit for the service of our Maker: as he speaks of his peculiar people by the mouth of his prophet: “Behold, I have refined thee; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction,” Is. xlviii. 10.

O that my soul could bless thee, my God; and adore thy justice and mercy, in the differences of thy proceedings with the sons of men! For wicked men and presump-

tuous sinners, thou hast reserved "the cup of trembling, and the dregs of the cup of thy fury," which they shall drink up, and die for ever: in the mean time, they feast without fear, and let themselves loose to all jollity and pleasure; as having "*made a league with death, and an agreement with hell.*" Whereas the failings of thy faithful, but weak servants are smartingly rewarded with the lashes of painful afflictions here, and passed over with silence in the reckonings of eternity; while their humble penitence admits them to a gracious pardon in this world, and everlasting blessedness in the other.

Even so, Lord, let not thy staff only, but thy rod also comfort me. Let "thy loving correction make me," however unworthy, "great" in thy favour; and let me bleed from that hand, which upholds me here and shall crown me hereafter.

SECTION VI.

It is easy enough to observe, that the main comfort of our sufferings must be expected from the issue; "for no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless; afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness, to them which are exercised thereby," Heb. xii. 11.

There is an end of all our sorrows, and that end is happy; such as makes more than abundant amends for all our sufferings. "They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy," Ps. cxxvi. 5. "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted; behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires: and I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones," Isa. liv. 11, 12. Indeed, "many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all," Ps. xxxiv. 19; yea, delivereth him, not without triumph and infinite advantage; "Though they have lien among the pots, yet shall they be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold," Ps. lxviii. 13.

It is not seldom seen, that God is pleased to recompense the sufferings of his servants with a sensible advancement in this present world. Job is double the richer for his losses; and Joseph changed the nasty rags of his prison for the fine linen of Egypt, and his gaol for a throne next to Pharaoh's.

But the full and unfailable perfection of their glorious amends abides for them in heaven; for "our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," 2 Cor. iv. 17. Lo, this, this is it, the assured expectation whereof is able to turn all the sorrows which the soul is capable of, into joy. It was a heavenly word which is said to have fallen from a mortified votary, whom Rome honours for a saint; "So great is the glory that I look for, that all pain is a pleasure to me." And, surely, could our narrow hearts apprehend it aright, so transcendent is the glory of this retribution, that we should not grudge at the condition, if we were allotted to pass through the torments of hell to so great a blessedness. How much more, therefore, should we, in intuition of this eternal happiness, lightly turn over those slight miseries which are incident unto us, in this our short pilgrimage upon earth.

Methinks I see with what courage and scorn, in this regard, that famous confessor, Marquis Arethusius, looked down upon his persecutors; when, being hanged up in a basket betwixt heaven and earth, his naked body all gashed with wounds and anointed with honey to invite the wasps and hornets to that cruel banquet, he cheerfully insulted over the malicious spectators below, as poor terrene wretches, creeping upon the base earth; whereas himself was now advanced aloft to that heaven, whereto he was aspiring.

With what pity did the valiant martyrs behold their enraged tyrants and wearied tormentors, when they looked up to their heaven; and, with the eye of their faith, saw that, which the protomartyr saw with bodily eyes, the heavens opened, and their Jesus standing at the right-hand of God ready to crown them with glory!

For us, we may not all be martyrs, but we must all be sufferers; for, "through much tribulation must we enter

into the kingdom of God," Acts xiv. 22; and, "if we suffer with Christ, we shall also reign with him," 2 Tim. ii. 12.

O poor tribulations, in respect to that kingdom! How can we be sensible of these flea-bitings, when we have a blessed eternity in our eye?

O God, bless thou mine eye with this sight, I shall not forbear to sing in the night of death itself: much less, in the twilight of all these worldly afflictions.

SECTION VII.

COME then, all ye earthly crosses; and muster up all your forces against me. Here is that which is able to make me more than a conqueror over you all.

Have I lost my goods, and foregone a fair estate? Had all the earth been mine, what is it to heaven? Had I been the lord of all the world, what were this to a kingdom of glory?

Have I parted with a dear consort, the sweet companion of my youth, the tender nurse of my age, the partner of my sorrows for these forty-eight years? She is but stept a little before me to that happy rest which I am panting towards, and wherein I shall speedily overtake her. In the mean time, and ever, my soul is espoused to that glorious and immortal Husband, from whom I shall never be parted.

Am I bereaved of some of my dear children, the sweet pledges of our matrimonial love, whose parts and hopes promised me comfort in my declining age? Why am I not rather thankful it hath pleased my God, out of my loins to furnish heaven with some happy guests? Why do I not, instead of mourning for their loss, sing praises to God for preferring them to that eternal blessedness?

Am I afflicted with bodily pain and sickness, which banisheth all sleep from my eyes, and exercises me with a lingering torture? Ere long, this momentary distemper shall end in an everlasting rest.

Am I threatened by the sword of an enemy? Suppose

that man to be one of the guardians of paradise, and that sword as flaming as it is sharp, that one stroke shall let me into that place of unconceivable pleasure, and admit me to feed on the tree of life for ever.

Cheer up then, O my soul ; and upon the fixed apprehension of the glory to be revealed, while thy weak partner, my body, droops ~~and~~ languishes under the sad load of years and infirmities, sing thou to thy God, even in the midnight of thy sorrows, and in the deepest darkness of death itself, songs of confidence, songs of spiritual joy, songs of praise and thanksgiving ; saying, with all the glorified ones, “ Blessing and honour, glory and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.” Amen.

THE SOUL'S FAREWELL TO EARTH,

AND

APPROACHES TO HEAVEN.

SECTION I.

BE thou ever, O my soul, holily ambitious ; always aspiring towards thy heaven ; not entertaining any thought that makes not towards blessedness. For this cause, therefore, put thyself upon thy wings, and leave the earth below thee ; and, when thou art advanced above this inferior world, look down upon this globe of wretched mortality, and despise what thou wast and hadst ; and think with thyself, “ There was I, not a sojourner so much as prisoner, for some tedious years. There have I been thus long tugging with my miseries, with my sins. There have my treacherous senses betrayed me to infinite evils, both done and suffered. How have I been there tormented with the sense of others’ wickedness, but more with the sense of my own ! What insolence did I see in men of power ! what rage in men of blood ! what gross superstition in the ignorant ! what abominable sacrilege in those that would be zealous ! what drunken revellings, what filthiness, what hellish profanations, in atheistic ruffians ! what perfidiousness in friendship, what cozenage in contracts ! what cruelty in revenges ; shortly, what a hell upon earth ! Farewell then, sinful world, whose favours have been no other than snares, and whose frowns no less than torments. Farewell for ever ; for if my flesh cannot yet clear itself of thee, yet my spirit shall ever know thee at a distance, and behold thee no otherwise than the escaped mariner looks back upon the rock,

whereon he was lately splitted. Let thy bewitched clients adore thee for a deity: all the homage thou shalt receive from me shall be no other than defiance; and if thy glorious shews have deluded the eyes of credulous spectators, I know thee for an impostor. Deceive henceforth those that trust thee; for me, I am out of the reach of thy fraud, out of the power of thy malice."

Thus do thou, O my soul, when thou art raised up to this height of thy fixed contemplation, cast down thine eyes contemptuously upon the region of thy former miseries, and be sure ever to keep up in a constant ascent towards blessedness, not suffering thyself to stoop any more to these earthly vanities. For tell me seriously, when the world was disposed to court thee most of all, what did it yield thee but unsound joys, sauced with a deep anguish of spirit; false hopes, shutting up in a heart-breaking disappointment; windy proffers, mocking thee with sudden retractions; bitter pills in sugar; poison in a golden cup? It shewed thee perhaps stately palaces, but stuffed with cares; fair and populous cities, but full of toil and tumult; flourishing churches, but annoyed with schism and sacrilege; rich treasures, but kept by ill spirits; pleasing beauties, but baited with temptation; glorious titles, but surcharged with pride; goodly semblances, with rotten insides; in short, death, disguised with pleasure and profits.

If, therefore, heretofore, thy inexperience have suffered thy feathers to be belimed with these earthly entanglements, yet now that thou hast happily cast those plumes and quitted thyself of these miserable incumbrances, thou mayest soar aloft above the sphere of mortality, and be still towering up towards thy heaven: and as those who have ascended to the top of some Athos or Teneriffe, see all things below them, in the valleys, small, and scarcely in their diminution discernible; so shall all earthly objects, in thy spiritual exaltation, seem unto thee; either thou shalt not see them at all, or at least so lessened, that they have to thee quite lost all the proportion of their former dimensions.

SECTION II.

It will not be long, O my soul, ere thou shalt absolutely leave the world as the place of thy habitation, being carried up, by the blessed angels, to thy rest and glory; but, in the mean time, thou must resolve to leave it in thy thoughts and affections. Thou mayest have power over these, even before the hour of thy separation; and these, rightly disposed, have power to exempt thee beforehand, from the interests of this inferior world, and to advance thine approaches to that world of the blessed. While thou art confined to this clay, there is naturally a luggage of carnality that hangs heavy upon thee, and sways thee down to the earth; not suffering thee to mount upward to that bliss whereunto thou aspirest. This must be shaken off, if thou wouldest attain to any capacity of happiness. Even in this sense, "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." It behoves thee to be, so far as this composition will admit, spiritualized, ere thou canst hope to attain to any degree of blessedness.

Thy conjunction with the body doth necessarily clog thee with an irrational part, which will unavoidably force upon thee some operation of its own; and thy senses will be interposing themselves in all thy intellectual employments, proffering thee the service of their guidance in all thy proceedings; but if thou lovest eternity of blessedness, shake them off as importunate suitors; gather up thyself into thy own regenerated powers, and do thy work without and above them. It is enough that thou hast, at first, taken some hint from them, of what concerns thee; (as for the rest, cast them off as unnecessary and impertinent) the prosecution whereof is too high and too internal, for them to intermeddle with. Thou hast now divine and heavenly things in chase, whereof there cannot be the least scent in any of these earthly faculties. Divest thyself therefore, what thou possibly mayest, of all materiality both of objects and apprehensions; and let thy pure, renewed, and illuminated intellect work only upon matter spiritual and celestial.

And, above all, propose unto thyself, and dwell upon, that purest, most perfect, simplest, most blessed object, the glorious and incomprehensible Deity, There thou shalt find more than enough to take up thy thoughts to all eternity. Be thou, O my soul, ever swallowed up in the consideration of that infinite self-being Essence, whom all created spirits are not capable sufficiently to admire. Behold, and never cease wondering at, the majesty of his glory. The bodily eyes dazzle at the sight of the sun ; but if there were as many suns as there are stars in the firmament of heaven, their united splendour were but darkness to their all-glorious Creator. Thou canst not yet hope to see him as he is ; but, lo, thou beholdest where he dwells in light inaccessible ; the sight of whose very outward verge is enough to put thee into a perpetual ecstasy. It is not for thee, as yet, to strive to enter within the vail : thine eyes may not be free, where the angels hide their faces. What thou wantest in sight, O my soul, supply in wonder. Never any mortal man, O God, durst sue to see thy face, save that one entire servant of thine, whose face thy conference had made shining and radiant ; but even he, though inured to thy presence, was not capable to behold such glory, and live. Far be it from me, O Lord, to presume so high. Only let me see thee as thou hast bidden me, and but so ; as not to behold thee, after thy gracious revelation, were my sin. Let me see, even in this distance, some glimmering of thy divine power, wisdom, justice, mercy, truth, providence ; and let me bless and adore thee, in what I see.

SECTION III.

O the infiniteness of thine almighty *power*, which thou not hast, but art, beyond the possibility of all limitations of objects or thoughts. In us, poor finite creatures, our power comes short of our will. Many things we fain would do, but cannot ; and great pity it were, that there should not be such a restraint upon our unruly appetites,

which would otherwise work out the destruction both of others and ourselves. But, O God, thy power is beyond thy will. Thou canst do more than thou wilt. Thou couldst have made more worlds, when thou madest this one; and even this one which thou hast made, Lord, how glorious a one is it! Lo, there needs no other demonstration of thine omnipotence.

O what a heaven is this, which thou hast canopied over our heads! How immensely capacious! how admirably beautiful! how bestudded with goodly globes of light! some one whereof hath in it such unspeakable glory, that there have not wanted nations, and those not of the savagest, which have mis-worshipped it for their God. And if thou hadst made but one of these in thy firmament, thy workmanship had been above our wonder, for even this had surpassed the whole frame of this lower world. But now, as their quality strives with their greatness, so their magnitude strives with their number, which of them shall more magnify the praise of their almighty Creator. And these three are no less than matched by the constant regularity of the perpetual motion of those mighty bodies; which having walked their daily rounds about the world above this five thousand six hundred and sixty years, yet are so ordered by thy inviolable decree, that they have not varied one inch from their appointed line, but still keep their due course and just distance each from other, although not fixed in any solid orb but moving singly in a thin and yielding sky, to the very same point whence they set forth.

And if the bodily and visible part of thy heavenly host, O God, be thus inconceivably glorious, where shall we find room to wonder at those spiritual and living powers, which inhabit those celestial mansions, and attend upon the throne of thy majesty; the thousand thousands of thy blessed angels, archangels, cherubim, seraphim, thrones, principalities, dominions, which in thy presence enjoy a bliss next to infinite; any one of which, if we could see him, were enough to kill us with his glory? Not one of those millions of mighty spirits, but is able to destroy a world. O then, how infinitely transcendent

is that power of thine, which hast both created all this heavenly hierarchy, and so movest in them, that only in and by thee they are thus potent !

Yea, Lord, let me but cast mine eyes down to this earth I tread upon, and view thy wonders in the deep, how manifestly do these proclaim thy divine omnipotence ! When I see this vast globe of earth and waters, dreadfully hanging in the midst of a liquid air, upheld by nothing but by thy powerful word ; when I see the rage of the swelling waves, naturally higher than the shores they beat upon, restrained to their bounds by thine over-ruling command ; when I see the earth beautifully garnished with marvellous variety of trees, herbs, flowers, richly stuffed with precious metals, stones, minerals ; when I see, besides a world of men, the numberless choice and differences of the substance, forms, colours, dispositions of beasts, fowls, fishes, wherewith these lower elements are peopled ; how can I but be dissolved into wonder of thine almighty power ?

SECTION IV.

NEITHER is thy power, O God, either more, or more thyself, than thy *wisdom* ; which is no less essential to thee, than infinite. What have we to do, silly and shallow wretches, with that incomprehensible wisdom which is intrinsical to thy divine nature ? The body of that sun is not for our weak eyes to behold. It is enough for me if I can but see some rays of that heavenly light which shines forth so gloriously upon thy creation ; in the framing and governing whereof, whether thy power or wisdom did and do more exhibit itself, thou only canst judge.

O the divine architecture of this goodly fabric of heaven and earth, raised out of nothing to this admirable perfection ! What stupendous artifice of composition is here ! what exquisite symmetry of parts ! what exact order of degrees ! what marvellous analogy betwixt beasts, fishes, plants, the natives of both elements !

O what a comprehensive reach is this of thine omnis-

ciency, which, at once, in one act, beholdest all the actions and events of all the creatures, that were, are, or shall be in this large universe ! What a contrivance of thine eternal counsel, which has most wisely and holily ordered how to dispose of every creature thou hast made, according to the pleasure of thy most just will ! What a sway of providence is this that governs the world ; over-ruling the highest, and stooping to the meanest piece, of thy creation ; concurring with and actuating the motions and operations of all second causes of whatsoever is done in heaven or in earth !

Yea, Lord, how wonderful are those irradiations of knowledge and wisdom, which thou hast beamed forth upon thine intelligent creatures, both angels and men ! As for those celestial spirits which see thy face continually, it is no marvel if they be illuminated in a degree far above human apprehension ; but that the rational soul of man, even in this woeful pilgrimage below, notwithstanding the opacity of that earth wherewith it is encompassed, should be so far enlightened, as that it is able to know all the motions of the heavens ; the magnitudes and distances of the stars ; the natures, properties, influences of the planets ; the instant of the eclipses, conjunctions, and several aspects of those celestial bodies ; that it can discover the secret treasures of earth and sea ; and knows how to unlock all the close cabinets both of art and nature ;—O God, what is this, but some little gleam of that pure and glorious light, which breaks forth from thine infiniteness upon thy creature ?

Yet were the knowledge of all the men on earth, and all the angels in heaven, multiplied a thousand fold, how unable were it, being united together, to reach unto the height of thy divine counsels, to fathom the bottom of thy most wise and holy decrees ! So that they must be forced to cry out, with that saint of thine, who was rapt into the third heaven, “ O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out ! ” Rom. xi. 33.

SECTION V.

BUT with what a trembling adoration, O my soul, must thou needs look upon the infinite *justice* of thy God, whose inviolable rule is to render to every man according to his works ! Alas, the little good thou hast been able to do, hath been allayed with so many and great imperfections, that it can expect no retribution but displeasure ; and for the many evils whereof thou art guilty, what canst thou look for but the wages of sin, death ? not temporary and natural only, which is but a separation of thee awhile from thy load of earth, but the spiritual and eternal separation from the presence of thy God, whose very want is the height of torments. Lo, whatever becomes of thee, God must be himself. In vain shouldst thou hope, that for thyself he will abate ought of his blessed essence, of his sacred attributes. That righteous doom must stand, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Hell claims its due : justice must be satisfied : where art thou now, O my soul ? What canst thou now make account of, but to despair and die ? Surely in thyself thou art lost. There is no way with thee, but utter perdition.

But look up, O my soul, look up "unto the hills, whence cometh thy salvation." See the heavens opening upon thee. See what reviving and comfortable rays of *grace* and *mercy* shine forth unto thee from that excellent glory ; and, out of that heavenly light, hear the voice of thy blessed Saviour, saying to thee, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help," Hos. xiii. 9. Even so, O Jesu, in thee, only in thee, is my help. Wretched man that I am, in myself I stand utterly forfeited to death and hell ! It is thou that hast redeemed me, with no less a ransom, than thy precious blood. Death was owing by me ; by thee it was paid for me : so that now my debt is fully discharged, and my soul clearly acquitted. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect ? It is God that justifieth : who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ, that died : yea, rather that is risen again," Rom. viii. 33, 34. Lo now, the rigour of thine inviolable justice is taken off by thine infinite mercy. The sum that I could

never pay, is, by the power of that faith which thou hast wrought in me, set off to my all-sufficient Surety, and, by thy divine goodness, graciously accepted as mine. I have paid it in him; he hath paid it for me. Thy justice is satisfied, thy debtor freed, and thy mercy magnified.

SECTION VI.

THERE are no bounds to be set unto thy thoughts, O my soul: since whatsoever thy God either is, or hath done, comes within thy prospect. There, besides the great work of his creation, thou mayest dwell upon the no less almighty work of his administration of this universal world, whereof the preservation and government is no less wonderful than the frame. There thou shalt see the marvellous subordination of creatures, some made to rule, others to obey; the powerful influence of the celestial bodies upon the inferior: the continual transmutation of elements, forsaking their own places and natures to serve the whole; forms dying, matter perpetual; all things maintained by a friendly discord of humours, out of which they are raised; the circular revolution of fashions, occurrents, events; the different and opposite dispositions of men, over-ruled to such a temper, that yet government is continued in the hands of few, society and commerce with all; shortly, all creatures, while they do either naturally or voluntarily act their own part, doing unawares the will of their Creator.

But that which may justly challenge thy longer stay and greater wonder, is the more than transcendant work of man's redemption, the mysteries whereof "the holy angels have desired to look into," but could never yet sufficiently conceive or admire. That the Son of God, the Lord of glory, coeternal, coequal with his Father, "God blessed for ever," should take upon him an estate lower than their own; should clothe his Deity with the rags of our flesh: should stoop to weak and miserable manhood; and, in that low and despicable condition, should submit himself to hunger, thirst, weariness, temptation of devils,

despite of men ; to the cruelty of tormenters ; to agonies of soul ; to the pangs of a bitter, ignominious, cursed death ; to the sense of his Father's wrath for us, wretched sinners, who had made ourselves the worst of creatures, enemies to God, slaves to Satan ; is above the reach of all finite apprehension. O ~~never~~ to be enough magnified mercy ! Thou didst not, O Saviour, when thou sawest mankind utterly lost and forlorn, content thyself to send down one of thy cherubim or seraphim, or some other of thy heavenly angels, to undertake the great work of our deliverance, as well knowing that task to be too high for any created power ; but wouldest, out of thine infinite love and compassion, vouchsafe so to abase thy blessed self, as to descend from the throne of thy celestial glory to this dungeon of earth ; and, not leaving what thou hadst and what thou wast, to assume what thou hadst not, man ; and to disparage thyself by being one of us, that we might become like unto thee, co-heirs of thy glory and blessedness. Thou that art the eternal Son of God, wouldest condescend so low, as to be man, that we who are worms and no men, might be advanced to be the sons of God. Thou wouldest be a servant, that we might reign. Thou wouldest expose thyself to the shame and disgrace of thy vile creatures here, that thou mightest raise us up to the height of heavenly honour with thee our God and thy holy angels. Thou wouldest die for a while, that we might live eternally.

Pause here awhile, O my soul, and do not wish to change thy thoughts. Neither earth nor heaven can yield thee any of higher concernment, of greater comfort. Only, withal, behold the glorious person of that thy blessed Mediator, after his victories over death and hell, sitting triumphant in all the majesty of heaven, adored by all those millions of celestial spirits in his glorified humanity ; and, as thou mayest, enjoy the vision of him by faith, till thou shalt be everlastingly blessed with a clear and present intuition. Long after that day ; and be ever careful, in the mean time, to make thyself ready for so infinite a happiness.

SECTION VII.

AND now, O my soul, having left below thee all the trivial vanities of earth, and fixed thyself, so far as thy weak eyes will allow thee, upon thy God and Saviour, in his almighty works and most glorious attributes ; it will be time for thee, and will not a little conduce to thy further address towards blessedness, to fasten thyself upon the sight of the happy estate of the saints above, who are gone before thee to their bliss, and have, through God's mercy, comfortably obtained that which thou aspirest unto. Thou that wert guided by their example, be likewise heartened by their success. Thou art yet a traveller; they, comprehensors. Thou art panting towards that rest, which they most happily enjoy. Thou art sweating under the cross, while they sit crowned in a heavenly magnificence.

See the place wherein they are, the heaven of heavens, the paradise of God ; infinitely resplendent, infinitely delectable ; such as no eye can behold, and not be blessed. Shouldst thou set thy tabernacle in the midst of the sun, thou couldst not but be encompassed with marvellous light ; yet, even there, it would be but as midnight with thee, in comparison with those irradiations of glory, which shine forth above in that imperial region : for thy God is the sun there. By how much, therefore, those divine rays of his exceed the brightest beams of his creature, so much doth the beauty of that heaven of the blessed, surpass the created light of this inferior and starry firmament. Even the very place contributes not a little to our joy or misery. It is hard to be merry in a gaol ; and the great Persian monarch thought it very improper for a courtier to be of a sad countenance within the verge of so great a royalty ; Neh. ii. 2. The very devils conceive horror at the apprehension of the place of their torment ; and can beseech the over-ruling power of thy Saviour not to command them to go out into the deep ; Luke viii. 31. No man can be so insensate, as to think there can be more dreadfulnes in the place of those infernal tortures, than there is pleasure and joy in the height of that sphere of blessedness ; since we know we have to do with a God that delights more in

the prosperity of his saints, than in the cruciation and howling of his enemies. How canst thou then, O my soul, but be wholly taken up with the sight of that celestial Jerusalem, the beauteous city of thy God, the blessed mansions of glorified spirits! Surely if earth could have yielded any thing more fair and estimable than gold, pearls, precious stones, it should have been borrowed to resemble these supernal habitations; but, alas, the lustre of these base materials doth but darken the resplendence of those divine excellencies. With what contempt now dost thou look down upon those muddy foundations of earth, which the low spirits of worldlings are wont to admire! And how feelingly dost thou bless and emulate "the spirits of just men made perfect," who are honoured with so blissful a habitation!

But what were the place, O my soul, how goodly and glorious soever in itself, if it were not for the presence of him, whose being there makes it heaven! Lo there the throne of that heavenly majesty, which, filling and comprehending the large circumference of this whole both lower and superior world, yet there keeps and manifests his state with the infinite magnificence of the King of eternal glory. There he, in an ineffectible manner, communicates himself to blessed spirits, both angels and men: and that very vision is no less to them, than beatifical. Surely were the place a thousand degrees lower in beauty and perfection than it is, yet that presence would render it celestial. The residence of the king is wont to turn the meanest village or castle into a court. The sweet singer of Israel saw this of old; and could say, "In thy presence is the fulness of joy; and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." It is not so in these earthly and finite excellencies. A man may see mountains of treasure, and be never a whit the richer; and may be the witness and agent too in another's honour, as Haman was of Mordecai's, and be so much more miserable; or may view the pomp and splendour of mighty princes, and be yet still a beggar: but the infinite graces of that heavenly King are so communicative, that no man can see him, but he must be transformed into the likeness of his glory.

SECTION VIII.

EVEN thy weak and imperfect vision of such heavenly objects, O my soul, is enough to lay a foundation of thy blessedness: and how can there choose but be raised thence, as a further degree towards it, a sweet complacency of heart, in an appropriation of what thou seest; without which, nothing can make thee happy? Let the sun shine never so brightly, what is this to thee, if thou be blind? Be the God of heaven never so glorious, yet if he be not thy God; be the Saviour of the world never so merciful, yet if he be not merciful to thee; be the heaven never so full of beauty and majesty, yet if thou have not thy portion in that inheritance of the saints in light; so far will it be from yielding thee comfort, that it will make a further addition to thy torment. What an aggravation of misery will it be to those who were children of the kingdom, that from that utter darkness whereinto they are cast, they shall see aliens “come from the east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven!” Cease not then, O my soul, till, by a sure and undefeasible application, thou hast brought all these home to thyself, and canst look upon the great God of heaven, the gracious Redeemer of the world, the glory of that celestial paradise, as thine own. Let it be thy bold ambition and holy curiosity to find thy name enrolled in that eternal register of heaven; and if there be any one room in the many mansions of that celestial Jerusalem, lower and less resplendent than another, hither do thou find thyself, through the great mercy of thy God, happily designed. It must be the work of thy faith that must do it: that divine grace it is, the power whereof can either fetch down heaven to thee, or carry thee beforehand up to thy heaven; and not affix thee only to thy God and Saviour, but unite thee to him, and, what is yet more, ascertain thee of so blessed an union.

Neither can it be, but that from this sense of appropriation, there must necessarily follow a marvellous contentment and complacency in the assurance of so happy an interest. Lord, how do I see poor worldlings please themselves in

the conceit of their miserable properties ! One thinks, " Is not this my great Babylon, which I have built ? " Another, " Are not these my rich mines ? " Another, " Is not this my royal and adored magnificence ? " And how are these unstable minds transported with the opinion of these great, but indeed worthless, peculiarities ; which, after some little time, moulder with them into dust ! How canst thou then but be pleasingly affected, O my soul, with the comfortable sense of having a God, a Saviour, and a heaven of thine own. For in these spiritual and heavenly felicities, our right is not partial and divided, as it useth to be in secular inheritances, so that every one hath his share distinguished from the rest, and parcelled out of the whole ; but here, each one hath all ; and this blessed patrimony is so communicated to all saints, that the whole is the propriety of every one.

Upon the assurance therefore of thy God's gracious promises made to every true believer, find thou thyself happily seized of both the King and kingdom of heaven, so far as thy faith can as yet feoff thee in both ; and delight thyself, above all things, in these unfailing pledges of thine instant blessedness ; and say, with the holy mother of thy Redeemer, " My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour," Luke i. 46, 47.

SECTION IX.

FROM this feeling complacency in the owning of thy right to glory and happiness, there cannot but arise a longing desire of the full possession thereof ; for thou canst not so little love thyself, as what thou knowest thou hast a just title unto, and withal apprehendest to be infinitely pleasing and beneficial, not to wish that thou mayest freely enjoy. If thou have tasted how sweet the Lord is, thou canst not but long for more of him, yea, for all. It is no otherwise even in carnal delights ; the degustation whereof is wont to draw on the heart to a more eager appetite : much more in spiritual delights ; the pleasures whereof, as they are more pure, so they are by the heavenly-minded,

with far greater ardency of spirit affected. . The covetous man's heart is in his bags ; what he hath doth but augment his lust for more ; and the having of more doth not satiate, but enlarge his desires ; he " that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver ; nor he that loveth abundance, with increase," Eccl. v. 10. But these celestial riches are so much more alluring, as they are more excellent, than those which are delved out of the bowels of the earth.

O my soul, thou hast, through the favour of thy God, sipped some little of the cup of immortality, and tasted of that heavenly manna, the food of angels ; and canst thou take up with these slight touches of blessedness ? Thou hast, though most unworthy, the honour to be contracted to thy Saviour here below ; thou knowest the voice of his spouse, " Draw me, we will run after thee. Stay me with flagons ; comfort me with apples ; for I am sick of love. Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices ;" Cant. i. 4 ; ii. 5 ; viii. 14. Where is thy love, if thou have not fervent desires of a perpetual enjoyment ? if thou do not earnestly wish for a full consummation of that heavenly match ?

O my Lord and Saviour, as I am not worthy to love thee, so I were not able to love thee, how amiable soever, but by thee. O thou who hast begun to kindle this fire of heavenly love in me, raise thou it up to a perfect flame. Make me not only sick of thy love, but ready and desirous to die for thee, that I may enjoy thee. O let me not endure that any worldly heart should be more enamoured of these earthly beauties which are but varnished rottenness, than I am of thee, who art of absolute and infinite perfection, and bestowest them in being loved. O when shall the day be, wherein thou wilt make up these blessed nuptials, and endow me with a full participation of that glory, wherewith thou art invested from and to all eternity ? Whereto have all thy sweet favours and gracious love-tokens tended, but to this issue of blessedness ? O do thou crown all thy mercies in me, and me with immortality.

SECTION X.

UPON this desire of fruition, if thou wouldst be truly happy, there must follow a constant prosecution of that desire; for if thy wishes be never so fervent, yet if they be only volatile and transient, they will be able to avail thee little. Slight and flickering motions of good, if they be not followed with due endeavours, come to no effect.

Content not thyself, therefore, O my soul, that thou hast entertained into thyself some affective thoughts of thy beatitude; but settle thyself in firm resolutions to pursue and perpetuate them: let them not call in as strangers, but dwell in thee as inmates, never to be, by any secular occasions, dislodged. Those morning dews of holy dispositions, which are ready to be exhaled with every gleam of worldly prosperity, as they find little acceptance from God, so they are able to afford small comfort to thee, whose condition is such, that they leave thee more disconsolate in their vanishing, than they yielded thee pleasure in their momentary continuance. Be thou able to say, with holy David, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed;" and then thou mayst well add, "I will sing and give praise," Psalm lvii. 7: otherwise thy distracted thoughts will admit no cause of sound joys. In this case it falls out with thee, O my soul, as with some fond child, who, eagerly following a bee in hope of her bag, sees a gay butterfly cross his way, and thereupon leaves his first chase, and runs after those painted wings; but in that pursuit, seeing a bird fly close by him, he leave the fly in hopes of a better purchase; but, in the mean time is disappointed of all, and catcheth nothing. It mainly behoves thee therefore, to keep up thy cogitations and affections close to these heavenly objects; and to check them whensoever thou perceivest an inclination to their wandering; like as the careful huntsman, when he finds his hound offering to follow after a new game, rates him off and holds him to his first scent.

Whither are ye straying, O my thoughts? What means this sinful and lossful inconstancy? Can ye be

happier in a change? Is there any thing in this miserable world, that can be worthy to carry you away from the hopes and affectations of blessedness? Have ye not full often complained of the worthlessness and satiety of these poor vanities here below? Have ye not found their promises false, their performances unsatisfactory, their disappointment irksome? Away then, ye frivolous temptations, and solicit those minds that are low and empty, like yourselves. As for me, I disdain your motions; and, being taken up with higher employments, scorn to descend to your base suggestions, which tend to nothing but mere earthliness.

But as there is no fire which will not go out if it be not fed, it cannot be enough that thou hast entertained these gracious resolutions, unless thou dost also supply and nourish them, with holy meditations, devout prayers, continual ejaculations, and the due frequenting of all the holy ordinances of thy God: without which, if they shall languish through thy neglect, thou shalt find double more work and difficulty in reviving them, than there could have been in maintaining and upholding them in their former vigour. Be not, therefore, wanting to thyself in the perpetual exercise and improvement of all those holy means, that may further and perfect these heavenly longings after salvation: thy God shall not be wanting to thee, in blessing thee with an answerable success.

SECTION XI.

It is the just praise of the marvellous bounty of thy God, O my soul, that "he will fulfil the desires of them that fear him." If, therefore, thou canst hunger and thirst after righteousness, if thy heart can yearn after heaven, he will be sure to satisfy thee with goodness; and not only bring thee home at the last to that land of promised blessedness, but, in the mean time also, put thee into an inchoate fruition of happiness, which is the next degree of thine ascent to heaven.

That which is complete, may be the surest rule of

knowing and judging of that which is imperfect. Wherein doth the perfection of heavenly bliss consist, but in a perpetual enjoying of the presence of God, in a clear vision of the divine essence, in a perfect union with God, and an eternal participation of his life and glory? Now, as grace is glory begun, and glory is grace consummate, so dost thou, O my soul, being wrought to it by the power of the Spirit of thy God, even in this life, how weakly soever, enter upon all these acts and privileges of beatitude. Even here below thou art never out of the presence of thy God, and that presence can never be other than glorious; and that it is not beatifical here, is not out of any deficiency in it, but in thine own miserable incapacity, who, while thou abidest in this vale of tears, and art clogged with this flesh, art no fit subject of so happy a condition.

Yea, that blessed presence is ever comfortably acknowledged by thee, and enjoyed with such contentment and pleasure, that thou wouldst not part with it for a world, and that thou justly accountest all earthly delights but mere vexations to that alone. "Whom have I in heaven, but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire, beside thee," Psalm lxxiii. 25. Balaam could say, how truly soever, "I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh;" but Lord, I see thee even now; I behold thee so nigh to me, that I live in thee, and would rather die than live without thee. I see thee, though weakly and dimly, yet truly and really. I see thee as my God all sufficient, as my powerful Creator, my merciful Redeemer, my gracious Comforter, I see thee the living God, the Father of lights, the God of spirits; dwelling in light inaccessible; animating, filling, comprehending this glorious world; and do awfully adore thine infiniteness. ✕

Neither do I look at thee with a trembling astonishment, as some dreadful stranger, or terrible avenger; but I behold thy majesty so graciously complying with my wretchedness, that thou admittest me to a blessed union with thee: I take thee at thy word, O dear Saviour, even that sweet word of impetration which thou wert pleased to utter to thy co-eternal Father, immediately

before thy meritorious passion; "I pray not for these alone, but for them also, which shall believe on me through their word: that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they may be one in us. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in one: and that the world may know, that thou hast sent me; and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me," John xvii. 20—23. I know thou couldest not but be heard in all that thou prayedst; and, therefore, I take what thou suedst for, as done. Lord, I do believe in thee: unite thou me to thee; make me one spirit with thee. It is no presumption to sue and hope for what thou hast prayed for, and promised to perform. O make me, according to the capability of my weak humanity, partaker of thy divine nature. Vouchsafe to allow me, even me, poor wretched soul, to say of thee, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine," Cant. vi. 3.

And, by virtue of this indissoluble union, why shouldest thou not, O my soul, find thyself endowed with a blessed participation of that heavenly life and glory, which is in and with him? In that thou art united to thy body, thou impartest to it vegetation, sense, motion; and givest it a share in the exercise of all thy noble faculties: how much more entire and beneficial is the spiritual union of thy God and thee! Alas, that bond of natural conjunction is easily dissolved by ten thousand ways of death; this heavenly knot is so fast tied, that all the powers of hell cannot unloose it. And the blessings communicated to thee by this divine match are so much more excellent, as the infinite Giver of them is above thy meanness. Lo, now thou art actually interested in all that thy God is or hath; his kingdom is thine, his glory is thine, to all eternity.

SECTION XII.

AND what now can follow, O my soul, upon the apprehension of thus enjoying the presence of thy God, and

the vision of so blessed an object, and thine union with him and participation of him; but a sensible ravishment of spirit, with a "joy unspeakable and full of glory?" If some great friend should heretofore have brought me to the court; and, having shewed me the splendour and magnificence of that seat of majesty, should have brought me into the sight of his royal person; and should have procured me, not only a familiar conference with him, but the entire affection of a favourite; and from thence there should have been heaped upon me titles of honour and large revenues, and yet higher, a consociation of princely dignity; how should I have been transported with the sense of so eminent an advancement! How great and happy should I have seemed, not more in other's eyes, than in my own! What big thoughts had hereupon swollen up my heart, in the days of my vanity! But, alas, what poor things are these, in comparison with those heavenly promotions! I might have been brought into the stateliest court of this world, and have been honoured, not only with the presence, but the highest favours of the best and greatest of kings; and yet have been most miserable. Yea, which of those monarchs who have the command and dispensation of all greatness, can secure himself from the saddest infelicities? But these spiritual prerogatives are above the reach of all possible miseries, and can and do put thee, in some degree, into an unfailing possession, both real and personal, of eternal blessedness.

I cannot wonder that Péter, when, with the other two disciples upon mount Tabor, he saw the glorious transfiguration of my Saviour, was out of himself for the time and knew not what he said; yet, not thinking himself and his partners any other ways concerned than in the sight of so heavenly a vision, he mentions only three tabernacles, for Christ, Moses, Elias; none for themselves; it was enough for him, if, without doors, he might be still blessed with such a prospect: but how had he been rapt from himself, if he had found himself taken into the society of this wondrous transformation, and interested in the communion of this glory! Thy renovation,

and the power of thy faith, O my soul, put thee into that happy condition. Thou art spiritually transfigured into the similitude of thy blessed Saviour, shining with his righteousness and holiness; Rom. xii. 2; Eph. iv. 24; so that he is glorified in thee, and thou in him; John xvii. 10; 2 Thes. i. 12;—glorified, not in the fulness of that perfection which will be, but in the pledge and earnest of what shall and must be hereafter.

O then with what unspeakable joy and jubilation, dost thou entertain thy happiness! How canst thou contain thyself any longer within these bounds of my flesh, when thou feelest thyself thus initiated into glory? Art thou in heaven, and knowest it not? Knowest thou not, that he who is within the entry or behind the screen, is as truly within the house, as he who walks in the hall or sits in the parlour? and canst thou pretend to be within the verge of heaven, and not rejoice? What is it that makes heaven, but joy and felicity? Thy very thought cannot separate these two, any more than it can sever the sun and light; for both these are equally the originals and fountains of light and joy; from whence they both flow, and in which both are complete. There is no light which is not derived from the sun, no true joy but from heaven: as, therefore, the nearer to the body of the sun, the more light and heat, so the nearer to heaven, the more excess of joy. And certainly, O my soul, there is nothing but infidelity, can keep thee from an exuberance of joy and delight in the apprehension of heaven.

Can the weary traveller, after he hath measured many tedious miles, and passed many dangers both by sea and land, and felt the harsh entertainments of a stranger, choose but rejoice to draw near, in his return, to a rich and pleasant home? Can the ward, after a hard pupilage, choose but rejoice that the day is coming, wherein he shall freely enjoy all his lordly revenues and royalties? Can a Joseph choose but find himself inwardly joyed, when, out of the dungeon, he shall be called up not to liberty only, but to honour: and shall be arrayed with a vesture of fine linen, and graced with Pharaoh's ring and chain, and set in his second chariot, and in the next chair to the

throne of Egypt? And canst thou apprehend thyself now approaching to the glory of the heaven of heavens, a place and state of so infinite contentment and happiness, and not be ecstasied with joy?

There, there shalt thou, O my soul, enjoy a perfect rest from all thy toils, cares, fears. There shalt thou find a true vital life, free from all the encumbrances of thy miserable pilgrimage; free from the dangers of either sins or temptations; free from all anxiety and distraction; free from all sorrow, pain, perturbation; free from all the possibility of change or death; a life, wherein there is nothing but pure and perfect pleasure, nothing but perpetual melody of angels and saints singing sweet hallelujahs to their God; a life, which the most glorious Deity both gives, and is; a life, wherein thou hast the full fruition of the ever-blessed Godhead, the continual society of the celestial spirits, the blissful presence of the glorified humanity of thy dear Saviour; a life, wherein thou hast ever consort with the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the patriarchs and prophets, the noble army of martyrs and confessors, the celestial synod of all the fathers and illuminated doctors of the church, the blessed assembly of all the faithful professors of the name of the Lord Jesus, who, having finished their course, sit now shining in their promised glory. See there that yet-unapproachable light, that divine magnificence of the heavenly King. See that resplendent crown of righteousness, which decks the heads of every of those saints, and is ready to be set on thine, when thou hast happily overcome those spiritual powers wherewith thou art still conflicting. See the joyful triumphs of these exulting victors. See the measures of their glory different, yet all full, and the least unmeasurable. Lastly, see all this happiness not limited to thousands, nor yet millions of years, but commensured by no less than eternity.

And now, my soul, if thou hast received the infallible engagement of thy God, in that, "having believed, thou art sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of thine inheritance, until the full redemption of thy purchased possession," Eph. i. 13, 14; if, through his infinite mercy, thou art now upon the entering into that

blessed place and state of immortality ; forbear, if thou canst, to be raised above thyself with "the joy of the Holy Ghost," to be enlarged towards thy God with a joy unspeakable and glorious ; see if thou canst now breathe forth any thing, but praises to thy God, and songs of rejoicing, bearing evermore a part in that heavenly hymn of the angels, "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might be unto our God for ever and ever," Rev. vii. 12.

SECTION XIII.

AND now what remains, O my soul, but that thou do humbly and faithfully wait at the gate of heaven for a happy entrance, at the good pleasure of thy God, into those everlasting mansions ?

I confess, should thy merits be weighed in the balance of a rigorous justice, another place, which I cannot mention without horror, were more fit for thee, more due to thee ; for, alas, thou hast been above measure sinful, and thou knowest the wages of sin, death. But "the God of my mercy hath prevented" thee, with infinite compassion ; and, in the multitude of his tender mercies, hath not only delivered thee from the nethermost hell, but hast also vouchsafed to translate thee *into the kingdom of his dear Son*. In him, thou hast boldness of access to the throne of grace. Thou, who in thyself art worthy to be a child of wrath, art in him adopted to be a co-heir of glory ; and hast the livery and seizing given thee beforehand of a blessed possession, the full estating wherein, I do, in all humble awfulness, attend. All the few days, therefore, of my appointed time will I wait at the threshold of grace, until my change come ; with a trembling joy, with a longing patience, with a comfortable hope.

Only, Lord, I know there is something to be done ere I can enter. I must die, ere I can be capable of enjoying that blessed life with thee. One stroke of thine angel must be endured in my passage into thy paradise. And, lo, here I am before thee, ready to embrace the condition :

even when thou pleasest, let me bleed once to be ever happy. Thou hast, after a weary walk through this roaring wilderness, vouchsafed to call up thy servant to mount Nebo; and from thence, afar off, to shew me the land of promise, a land that flows with milk and honey. Do thou but say, "Die thou on this hill," with this prospect in mine eye; and do thou mercifully take my soul from me; who gavest it to me; and dispose of it where thou wilt in that region of immortality. Amen, Amen. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

Behold, Lord, I have, by thy providence, dwelt in this house of clay more than double the time wherein thou wert pleased to sojourn upon earth; yet I may well say, with thy holy patriarch, "Few and evil have been the days of the years of my pilgrimage," Gen. xlvii. 9; few in number, evil in condition; few in themselves, but none at all to thee, with whom "a thousand years are but as one day." But had they been double to the age of Methuselah, could they have been so much as one minute to eternity? Yea, what were they to me, now that they are past, but as a tale that is told and forgotten?

Neither yet have they been so few, as evil. Lord, what troubles and sorrows hast thou let me see, both my own and others! what vicissitudes of sickness and health! what ebbs and flows of condition! how many successions and changes of princes, both at home and abroad! what turnings of times! what alteration of governments! what shiftings and downfalls of favourites! what ruins and desolations of kingdoms! what sacking of cities! what havocks of war! what frenzies of rebellions! what underminings of treachery! what cruelties and barbarisms in revenges! what anguish in the oppressed and tormented! what agonies in temptations! what pangs in dying! These I have seen, and in these I have suffered. And now, Lord, how willing I am to change time for eternity! the evils of earth for the joys of heaven! misery for happiness! a dying life for immortality!

Even so, Lord Jesus. Take what thou hast bought; receive my soul to thy mercy; and crown it with thy glory. Amen, Amen.

A HOLY RAPTURE,

OR

A MEDITATION ON THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

SECTION I.

The Love of Christ how passing Knowledge ; how free of us, before we were.

WHAT is it, O blessed apostle, what is it, for which thou dost so earnestly bow thy knees, in the behalf of thine Ephesians, unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? even this, that they “may know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,” Eph. iii. 19.

Give me leave, first, to wonder at thy suit, and then much more at what thou suest for. Were thine affections raised so high to thine Ephesians, that thou shouldest crave for them impossible favours? Did thy love so far overshoot thy reason, as to pray they might attain to the knowledge of that which cannot be known? It is the love of Christ, which thou wishest they may know; and it is that love, which thou sayest is past all knowledge. What shall we say to this? Is it that there may be holy ambitions of those heights of grace, which we can never hope actually to obtain? Or is it rather, that thou supposest and prayest that they may reach to the knowledge of that the measure whereof they could never aspire to know?

Surely so it is, O blessed Jesus. That thou hast loved us, we know; but how much thou hast loved us, is past the comprehension of angels. Those glorious spirits, as

they desire to look into the deep mystery of our redemption, so they wonder to behold that divine love whereby it is wrought ; but they can no more reach to the bottom of it, than they can affect to be infinite ; for surely no less than an endless line can serve to fathom a bottomless depth. Such, O Saviour, is the abyss of thy love to miserable man. Alas, why do we poor wretched dust of the earth go about to measure it, by the spans and inches of our shallow thoughts ? Far, far be such presumptions from us ! Only admit us, O blessed Lord, to look at, to admire and adore that, which we give up for incomprehensible.

What shall we then say to this love, O dear Jesus, both as thine, and as cast upon us ? All earthly love supposeth some kind of equality, or proportion at least, betwixt the person that loves, and is loved. Here is none at all : so that, which is past wonder, extremes meet without a mean : for, lo, thou who art the eternal and absolute Being, God blessed for ever, lovedst me that had no being at all : thou lovedst me, both when I was not, and could never have been but by thee. It was from thy love, that I had any being at all ; much more was it from thy love, that when thou hadst given me a being, thou shouldest follow me with succeeding mercies. Who but thou, who art infinite in goodness, would love that which is not ? Our poor sensual love is drawn from us, by the sight of a face or picture ; neither is ever raised, but upon some pleasing motive : thou wouldest make that which thou wouldest love, and wouldest love that which thou hast made. O God, was there ever love so free, so gracious, as this of thine ? Who can be capable to love us, but men or angels ? Men love us, because they see something in us, which they think amiable ; angels love us, because thou doest so : but why dost thou, O blessed Lord, love us, but because thou wouldest ? There can be no cause of thy will, which is the cause of all things. Even so, Lord, since this love did rise only from thee, let the praise and glory of it rest only in thee.

SECTION II.

How free of us, that had made ourselves vile and miserable.

YET more, Lord, we had lost ourselves, before we were ; and, having forfeited what we should be, had made ourselves perfectly miserable. Even when we were worse than nothing, thou wouldest love us.

Was there ever any eye enamoured of deformity? Can there be any bodily deformity comparable to that of sin? Yet, Lord, when sin had made us abominably loathsome, didst thou cast thy love upon us. A little scurf of leprosy, or some few nasty spots of morpew, or but some unsavoury scent, sets us off, and turns our love into detestation. But as for thee, O God, when we were become as foul and as ugly as sin could make us, even then was thy love enflamed towards us ; even when we were weltering in our blood, thou saidst, “ Live ; ” and washedst, and anointedst us, and clothedst us with a broidered work, and deckedst us with ornaments, and graciously espousedst us to thyself, and receivedst us into thine own bosom. “ Lord, what is man, that thou art ” thus “ mindful of him ; and the son of man, that thou ” thus “ visitest him ? ”

O what are we, in comparison of thy once glorious angels? They sinned and fell, never to be recovered, never to be loosed from those everlasting chains, wherein they are reserved to the judgment of the great day. Whence is it then, O Saviour, whence is it, that thou hast shut up thy mercy from those thy more excellent creatures, and hast extended it to us vile sinful dust? Whence, but that thou wouldest love man because thou wouldest?

Alas ! it is discouragement enough to our feeble friendship, that he to whom we wished well, is miserable. Our love doth gladly attend upon and enjoy his prosperity ; but when his estate is utterly sunk, and his person exposed to contempt and ignominy, yea to torture and death, who is there, that will then put forth himself to own a forlorn and perishing friend? But as for thee, O blessed Jesus, so ardent was thy love to us, that it was not in the power of our extreme misery to abate it ; yea so, as that

the deploredness of our condition did but heighten that holy flame. Why speak I of shame or sufferings? Hell itself could not keep thee off from us. Even from that pit of eternal perdition didst thou fetch our condemned souls, and hast contrarily vouchsafed to put us into a state of everlasting blessedness.

SECTION III.

How yet free of us, that were professed Enemies.

THE common disposition of men pretends to a kind of justice in giving men their own; so that they will repay love for love, and think they may for hatred return enmity. Nature itself then teacheth us to love our friends: it is only grace that can love an enemy.

But, as of injuries, so of enmities thereupon grounded, there are certain degrees. Some are slight and trivial; some, main and capital. If a man do but scratch my face, or give some light dash to my fame, it is no great mastery, upon submission to receive such an offender to favour; but if he have endeavoured to ruin my estate, to wound my reputation, to cut my throat, not only to pardon this man, but to hug him in my arms, to lodge him in my bosom as my entire friend, this would be no other than a high improvement of my charity.

O Lord Jesus, what was I, but the worst of enemies, when thou vouchsafest to embrace me with thy loving mercy? How had I shamefully rebelled against thee, and yielded up all my members, as instruments of unrighteousness and sin! How had I crucified thee, the Lord of life! How had I done little other, than tread under foot the blessed Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing! How had I, in some sort, done despite unto the Spirit of grace! Yet even then, in despite of all my most odious unworthiness, didst thou spread thine arms to receive me; yea, thou openedst thy heart to let me in. O love, passing not knowledge only, but wonder also! O mercy, not incident unto any thing less comprehensible.

SECTION IV.

The wonderful Effects of the Love of Christ. His Incarnation.

BUT, O dear Lord, when, from the object of thy mercy, I cast mine eyes upon the effects and improvement of thy divine favours, and see what thy love hath drawn from thee towards the sons of men, how am I lost in a just amazement!

It is that which fetched thee down from the glory of the highest heavens, from the bosom of thine eternal Father, to this lower world, the region of sorrow and death. It is that which, to the wonder of angels, clothed thee with this flesh of ours, and brought thee, who thoughtest it "no robbery to be equal with God," to an estate lower than thine own creatures.

O mercy, transcending the admiration of all the glorious spirits of heaven, that God would be incarnate! Surely, that all those celestial powers should be reduced to either worms or nothing, that all this goodly frame of creation should run back into its first confusion or be reduced to one single atom, is not so high a wonder, as for God to become man. Those changes, though the highest nature is capable of, are yet but of things finite; this is of an infinite subject, with which the most excellent of finite things can hold no proportion.

O the great mystery of godliness, "God manifest in the flesh, and seen of angels!" Those heavenly spirits had, ever since they were made, seen his most glorious Deity, and adored him as their omnipotent Creator; but to see that God of spirits invested with flesh, was such a wonder as had been enough, if their nature could have been capable of it, to have astonished even glory itself; and whether to see him that was their God so humbled below themselves, or to see humanity thus advanced above themselves, were the greater wonder to them, they only know.

It was your foolish misprision, O ye ignorant Lystrians, that you took the servants for the Master: here only it is verified, which you supposed, that God is come

down to us in the likeness of man, and as man conversed with men.

What a disparagement do we think it was for the great monarch of Babylon for seven years together, as a beast to converse with the beasts of the field ! Yet, alas, beasts and men are fellow creatures ; made of one earth ; drawing in the same air ; returning, for their bodily part, to the same dust ; symbolizing in many qualities, and in some mutually transcending each others ; so that here may seem to be some terms of a tolerable proportion ; since many men are in disposition too like unto beasts, and some beasts are in outward shape somewhat like unto men : but for him that was, and is, “ God blessed for ever,” eternal, infinite, incomprehensible, to put on flesh and become a man amongst men, was to stoop below all possible disparities that heaven and earth can afford. O Saviour, the lower thine abasement was for us, the higher was the pitch of thy divine love to us.

SECTION V.

His Love in his Sufferings.

YET in this our human condition, there are degrees. One rules and glitters in all earthly glory ; another sits despised in the dust : one passes the time of his life in much jollity and pleasure ; another wears out his days in sorrow and discontentment. Blessed Jesus, since thou wouldest be a man, why wouldest thou not be a King of men ? Since thou wouldest come down to our earth, why wouldest thou not enjoy the best entertainment the earth could yield thee ? Yea, since thou who art the eternal Son of God, wouldest be the Son of man, why didst thou not appear in a state like to the King of heaven, attended with the glorious retinue of angels ? O yet greater wonder of mercies, thee same infinite love that brought thee down to the form of a man, would also bring thee down, being man, to the form of a servant ! So didst thou love man, that thou wouldest take part with him of his misery, that he might take part with thee of thy blessedness. Thou

wouldest be poor, to enrich us: thou wouldest be burthened, for our ease; tempted, for our victory; despised, for our glory.

With what less than ravishment of spirit can I behold thee, who wert from everlasting clothed with glory and majesty, wrapped in rags! thee, who fillest heaven and earth with the majesty of thy glory, cradled in a manger! thee, who art the God of power, fleeing in thy mother's arms from the rage of a weak man! thee, who art the God of Israel, driven to be nursed out of the bosom of thy church! thee, who madest the heaven of heavens, busily working in the homely trade of a foster-father! thee, who commandest the devils to their chains, transported and tempted by that foul spirit! thee who art God all-sufficient, exposed to hunger, thirst, weariness, danger, contempt, poverty, revilings, scourgings, persecution! thee, who art the just Judge of all the world, accused and condemned! thee, who art the Lord of life, dying upon the tree of shame and curse! thee, who art the eternal Son of God, struggling with thy Father's wrath! thee, who hast said, "I and my Father are one," sweating drops of blood in thine agony, and crying out on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" thee, who hast the keys of hell and of death, lying sealed up in another's grave!

O Saviour, whither hath thy love to mankind carried thee? What sighs, and groans, and tears, and blood, hast thou spent upon us wretched men! How dear a price hast thou paid for our ransom! What raptures of spirit can be sufficient for the admiration of thy so infinite mercy? Be thou swallowed up, O my soul, in this depth of divine love, and hate to spend thy thoughts any more upon the base objects of this wretched world, when thou hast such a Saviour to take them up.

SECTION VI.

His Love in preparing Heaven for us.

BUT, O blessed Jesus, if, from what thou hast suffered for me, I cast mine eyes upon what thou hast done for my soul, how is my heart divided betwixt the wonders of both!

and may as soon tell how great either of them is, as whether of them is the greater.

It is in thee, that I was elected from all eternity, and ordained to a glorious inheritance before there was a world. We are wont, O God, to marvel at and bless thy provident beneficence to the first man, that before thou wouldst bring him forth into the world, thou wert pleased to furnish such a world for him, so goodly a house over his head, so pleasant a paradise under his feet, such variety of creatures round about him for his subjection and attendance. But how should I magnify thy mercy, who, before that man or that world had any being, hast so far loved me, as to pre-ordain me to a place of blessedness in that heaven which should be, and to make me a co-heir with my Christ of thy glory!

And O what a heaven is this, that thou hast laid out for me! how resplendent, how transcendently glorious! Even that lower paradise which thou providest for the harbour of innocence and holiness, was full of admirable beauty, pleasure, magnificence, but, if it be compared with this paradise above, which thou hast prepared for the everlasting entertainment of restored souls, how mean and beggarly it was! O match too unequal of the best piece of earth with the highest state of the heaven of heavens!

In the earthly paradise I find thine angels, the cherubim; but it was to keep a man off from that garden of delight, and from the tree of life, in the midst of it; but, in this heavenly one, I find millions of thy cherubim and seraphim rejoicing at man's blessedness, and welcoming the glorified souls to their heaven. There I find but the shadow of that, whereof the substance is here. There we were so possessed of life, that yet we might forfeit it; here is life, without all possibility of death. Temptation could find access thither; here is nothing but a free and complete fruition of blessedness. There were delights fit for earthly bodies; here is glory, more than can be enjoyed by blessed souls. That was watered with four streams, muddy and impetuous; in this is "the pure river of the water of life, clear as chrysal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." There I find thee only walking in the cool of the day; here manifesting thy majesty con-

usually. There I see only a most pleasant orchard, set with all manner of varieties of flourishing and fruitful plants; here I find also the city of God, infinitely rich and magnificent; the building of the wall of it of jasper; and the city itself pure gold, like unto clear glass; and the foundations of the wall garnished with all manner of precious stones.

All that I can here attain to see, is the pavement of thy celestial habitation. And, Lord, how glorious it is! how bespangled with the glittering stars, for number, for magnitude equally admirable! What is the least of them but a world of light? And what are all of them, but a confluence of so many thousand worlds of beauty and brightness, met in one firmament? And if this floor of thy heavenly palace be thus richly set forth, O how infinite glory and magnificence must there needs be within! Thy chosen vessel, that had the privilege to be caught up thither, and to see that divine state whether with bodily or mental eyes, can express it no otherwise, than that it cannot possibly be expressed. No, Lord, it were not infinite, if it could be uttered. Thoughts go beyond words; yet even these come far short also, He that saw it, says, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

SECTION VII.

His Love in our Redemption from Death and Hell.

YET is thy love, O Saviour, so much more to be magnified of me in this purchased glory, when I cast down mine eyes, and look into that horrible gulf of torment and eternal death, whence thou hast rescued my poor soul.

Even out of the greatest contentment which this world is capable to afford unto mankind, to be preferred to the joys of heaven is an unconceivable advantage; but from the depth of misery to be raised up unto the highest pitch of felicity, adds so much more to the blessing, as the evil from whence we are delivered is more intolerable.

O blessed Jesus, what a hell is this, out of which thou hast freed me ! What dreadful horror is here ! what darkness ! what confusion ! what anguish of souls, that would and cannot die ! what howling, and yelling, and shrieking, and gnashing ! what everlasting burnings ! what never slaking tortures ! what merciless fury of unweariable tormentors ! what utter despair of any possibility of release ! what exquisiteness, what infiniteness of pains, that cannot, yet must be endured !

O God, if the impotent displeasure of weak men have devised such subtle engines of revenge upon their fellow-mortals for but petty offences, how can we but think thine infinite justice and wisdom must have ordained such forms and ways of punishment for heinous sins done against thee, as may be answerable to the violation of thy divine majesty ? O, therefore, the most fearful and deplored condition of damned spirits, never to be ended, never to be abated ! O these unquenchable flames, O that burning Tophet, deep and large, and those streams of brimstone, wherewith it is kindled ! O that worm, ever gnawing and tearing the heart, never dying, never sated ! O ever-living death ! O ever-renewing torments ! O never pitied, never intermitted damnation !

From hence, O Saviour, from hence it is, that thou hast fetched my condemned soul. This is the place, this is the state, out of which thou hast snatched me up into thy heaven. O love and mercy, more deep than those depths from which thou hast saved me, more high than that heaven to which thou hast advanced me !

SECTION VIII.

Christ's Love in giving us the Guard of his Angels:

Now, whereas in my passage from this state of death towards the fruition of immortal glory, I am waylaid by a world of dangers, partly through my own sinful aptness to miscarriages, and partly through the assaults of my spiritual enemies ; how hath thy tender love and compas-

sion, O blessed Jesu, undertaken to secure my soul from all these deadly perils, both without and within; without, by the guardiance of thy blessed angels; within, by the powerful inoperation of thy good Spirit which thou hast given me!

O that mine eyes could be opened, with Elisha's servant, that I might see those troops of heavenly soldiers, those horses and chariots of fire, wherewith thou hast encompassed me! every one of which is able to chase away a whole host of the powers of darkness.

Who am I, Lord, who am I, that, upon thy gracious appointment, these glorious spirits should still watch over me, in mine uprising and down lying; in my going out and coming in? that they should bear me in their arms; that they should shield me with their protection? Behold, such is their majesty and glory, that some of thy holiest servants have hardly been restrained from worshipping them; yet so great is thy love to man, that thou hast ordained them to be "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." Surely they are in nature far more excellent than man, as being spiritual substances, pure intelligences, meet to stand before the throne of thee the King of glory; what a mercy then is this, that thou who wouldest humble thyself to be lower than they in the susception of our nature, art pleased to humble them in their offices to the guardianship of man, so far as to call them the angels of thy little ones upon earth! How hast thou blessed us! and how should we bless thee, in so mighty and glorious attendants!

SECTION IX.

His Love in giving us his Holy Spirit.

NETHER hast thou, O God, merely turned us over to the protection of those tutelary spirits, but hast held us still in thine own hand; having not so strongly defenced us without, as thou hast done within; since that is wrought by thine angels; this, by the Spirit.

O the sovereign and powerful influences of thy Holy Ghost; whereby we are furnished with all saving graces, strengthened against all temptations, heartened against all our doubts and fears, enabled both to resist and overcome, and, upon our victories, crowned!

O divine bounty, far beyond the reach of wonder! "So God," the Father, "loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." So God, the Son, loved the world of his elect, that he gave unto them "the Holy Spirit of promise, whereby they are sealed unto the day of redemption;" whereby, "according to the riches of his glory, they are strengthened with might in the inner man:" by the virtue whereof shed abroad in their hearts, they are enabled to cry, "Abba, Father." O gifts, either of which are more worth than many worlds; yet, through thy goodness, O Lord, both of them mine. How rich is my soul, through thy divine munificence, how over-laid with mercies! How safe in thine Almighty tuition! How happy in thy blessed possession!

Now therefore I dare, in the might of my God, bid defiance to all the gates of hell. Do your worst, O all ye principalities, and powers, and rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickednesses in high places; do your worst. God is mine, and I am his. I am above your malice, in the right of him whose I am. It is true, I am weak; but he is omnipotent. I am sinful; but he is infinite holiness. That power, that holiness, in his gracious application, is mine.

It is my Saviour's love, that hath made this happy exchange of his righteousness for my sin, of his power for my infirmity. "Who then shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God, that justifieth. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him, that loved us." So that, "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Lo where this love is placed. Were it our love of God, how easily might the power of a prevalent temptation separate us from it, or it from us ! For, alas, what hold is to be taken of our affections ; which, like unto water, are so much more apt to freeze, because they have been heated ? But it is the love of God to us in Christ Jesus, which is ever as himself, constant and eternal. He can no more cease to love us, than to be himself. He cannot but be unchangeable : we cannot but be happy.

SECTION X.

Our Sense and Improvement of Christ's Love in all the former particulars : and, first, in respect of the Inequality of the Persons.

ALL this, O dear Jesus, hast thou done, all this hast thou suffered, for men. And O now for a heart, that may be some ways answerable to thy mercies ! Surely even good natures hate to be in debt for love, and are ready to repay favours with interest.

O for a soul sick of love ; yea, sick unto death ! Why should I, how can I, be any otherwise, any whit less affected, O Saviour ? This sickness is my only health ; this death is my life : and not to be thus sick, is to be dead in sins and trespasses. I am rock, and not flesh, if I be not wounded with these heavenly darts. Ardent affection is apt to attract love, even where there is little or no beauty ; and excellent beauty is no less apt to inflame the heart, where there is no answer of affection ; but when these two meet together, what breast can hold against them ? And here they are both in an eminent degree. Thou canst say even of thy poor church, though labouring under many imperfections, " Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse ; thou hast ravished my heart, with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse ! " And canst thou, O blessed Saviour, be so taken with the incurious and homely features of thy faithful ones ; and shall not we much more

be altogether enamoured of thine absolute and divine beauty, of whom every believing soul can say, "My beloved is white and ruddy; the chiefest among ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold; his eyes are as the eyes of doves, by the rivers of waters; his cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers; his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh?" It hath pleased thee, O Lord, out of the sweet ravishments of thy heavenly love, to say to thy poor church, "Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me;" but O let me say unto thee, "Turn thine eyes to me, that they may overcome me." I would be thus ravished, thus overcome. I would be thus out of myself, that I might be all in thee.

Thou lovedst me before I had being: let me, now that I have a being, be wholly taken up with thy love: let me set all my soul upon thee, that gavest me being; upon thee, who art the eternal and absolute Self-Being; who hast said, and who only could say, "I am that I am." Alas, Lord, we are nothing, but what thou wilt have us; and cease to be when thou callest in that breath of life, which thou hast lent us. Thou art that incomprehensibly glorious and infinite self-existing spirit; from eternity, in eternity, to eternity; in and from whom all things are. It is thy wonderful mercy, that thou wouldest condescend so low, as to vouchsafe to be loved of my wretchedness; of whom thou mightest justly require and expect nothing, but terror and trembling. It is my happiness, that I may be allowed to love a majesty so infinitely glorious. O let me not be so far wanting to my own felicity, as to be less than ravished with thy love.

SECTION XI.

A further Enforcement of our Love to Christ, in respect of our Unworthiness, and his Sufferings, and prepared Glory.

THOU lovedst me, when I was deformed, loathsome, for-

lorn, and miserable : shall I not now love thee, when thou hast freed me, and decked me with the ornaments of thy graces ? Lord Jesus, who should enjoy the fruit of thine own favours, but thyself ? How shamefully injurious were it, that when thou hast trimmed up my soul, it should prostitute itself to the love of the world ! O take my heart to thee alone. Possess thyself of that which none can claim but thyself.

Thou lovedst me, when I was a professed rebel against thee ; and receivedst me, not to mercy only, but to the endearment of a subject, a servant, a son : where should I place the improvement of the thankful affections of my loyalty and duty, but upon thee.

Thou, O God, hast so loved us, that thou wouldest become the Son of man for our sakes, that we who are the sons of men, might become the sons of God. O, that we could put off the man, to put on Christ ! that we could neglect and hate ourselves for thee, that hast so dearly loved us, as to lay aside thy heavenly glory for us !

How shall I be vile enough, O Saviour, for thee, who, for my sake, being the Lord of life and glory, wouldest take upon thee the shape of a servant ? How should I welcome that poverty which thy choice hath sanctified ! How resolutely shall I grapple with the temptations of that enemy whom thou hast foiled for me ! How cheerfully should I pass through those miseries and that death which thou hast sweetened ! With what comfortable assurance shall I look upon the face of that merciful justice, which thou hast satisfied !

But O what a blessed inheritance hast thou, in thine infinite love, provided for me ! “ an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven ” for me ! so that “ when my earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved, I have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” A house ? Yea, a palace of heavenly state and magnificence. Neither is it less than a kingdom, that abides there for me ; a kingdom, so much more above these worldly monarchies, as heaven is above this clod of earth.

Now, Lord, what conceits, what affections of mind can be, in the least sort, answerable to so transcendent mercy? If some friend shall have been pleased to bestow some mean legacy upon me, or shall have feoffed me in some few acres of his land, how deeply do I find myself obliged to the love and memory of so kind a benefactor! O then, Lord, how can my soul be capable of those thoughts and dispositions, which may reach to the least proportion of thine infinite bounty; who, of a poor worm on earth, hast made me an heir of the kingdom of heaven?

Woe is me, how subject are these earthly principalities to hazard and mutability, whether through death or insurrection! but this crown which thou hast laid up for me, is immarcescible; and shall sit immovably fast upon my head, not for years, not for millions of ages, but for all eternity. O let it be my heaven here below, in the meanwhile, to live in a perpetual fruition of thee; and to begin those hallelujahs to thee here, which shall be as endless as thy mercy, and my blessedness.

SECTION XII.

The Improvement of our Love to Christ for the Mercy of his Deliverance, of the Tuition of his Angels, of the powerful Working of his good Spirit.

HADST thou been pleased to have translated me from thy former paradise, the most delightful seat of man's original integrity and happiness, to the glory of the highest heaven, the preferment had been infinitely gracious; but to bring my soul from the nethermost hell, and to place it among the choir of angels, doubles the thank of thy mercy and the measure of my obligation. How thankful was thy prophet but to an Ebedmelech, that by a cord and rags let down into that dark dungeon, helped him out of that uncomfortable pit wherein he was lodged! yet what was there, but a little cold, hunger, stench, closeness, obscurity? Lord, how should I bless thee, that hast fetched my soul from that pit of eternal horror, from that lake of

thee our God—Lord, what room can there possibly be, in these strait and narrow hearts of ours, for a due admiration of thy transcendent love and mercy?

I am swallowed up, O God, I am willingly swallowed up, in this bottomless abyss of thine infinite love : and there let me dwell, in a perpetual ravishment of spirit, till, being freed from this clog of earth and filled with the fullness of Christ, I shall be admitted to enjoy that which I cannot now reach to wonder at, thine incomprehensible bliss and glory which thou hast laid up in the highest heavens for them that love thee, in the blessed communion of all thy saints and angels, thy cherubim and seraphim, thrones, dominions, and principalities, and powers ; in the beatifical presence of thee, the ever-living God, the eternal Father of spirits, Father, Son, Holy Ghost, one infinite Deity in three co-essentially, co-eternally, co-equally glorious Persons : To whom be blessing, honour, glory, and power, for ever and ever. Amen. Hallelujah.

MEDITATIONS AND VOWS,

DIVINE AND MORAL.

CENTURY I.

I.—**I**n meditation, those who begin heavenly thoughts and prosecute them not, are like those who kindle a fire under green wood, and leave it as soon as it but begins to flame; losing the hope of a good beginning, for want of seconding it with a suitable proceeding. When I set myself to meditate, I will not give over till I come to an issue. It hath been said by some, that the beginning is as much as the midst, yea, more than all; but I say, the ending is more than the beginning.

II. There is nothing, but man, that respecteth greatness; not God, not nature, not disease, not death, not judgment. Not God; he is no excepter of persons. Not nature; we see the sons of princes born as naked, as the poorest; and the poor child as fair, well-favoured, strong, witty, as the heir of nobles. Not disease, death, judgment; men sicken alike, die alike, fare alike after death. There is nothing, besides natural men, of whom goodness is not respected. I will honour greatness in others; but as for myself, I will esteem a dram of goodness worth a whole world of greatness.

III. As there is a foolish wisdom, so there is a wise ignorance, in not prying into God's ark, not enquiring into things not revealed. I would fain know all that I need, and all that I may. I leave God's secrets to himself. It is happy for me, that God makes me of his court, though not of his council.

IV. As there is no vacuity in nature, no more is there spiritually. Every vessel is full, if not of liquor, yet of air. So is the heart of man. Though by nature it is empty of grace, yet it is full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Now, as it filleth with grace, so it is emptied of its evil qualities : as in a vessel, so much water as goes in, so much air goes out. But man's heart is a narrow-mouthed vessel, and receives grace but by drops ; and therefore asks a long time to empty and fill. Now as there be differences in degrees, and one heart is nearer to fulness than another, so the best vessel is not quite full while it is in the body, because there are still remainders of corruption. I will neither be content with that measure of grace I have, nor impatient of God's delay ; but every day I will endeavour to have one drop added to the rest ; so my last day shall fill up my vessel to the brim.

V. Satan would seem to be mannerly and reasonable, making as if he would be content with one half of the heart ; whereas God challengeth all or none : as indeed he hath most reason to claim all, that made all. But this is nothing but a crafty fetch of Satan ; for he knows, that if he have any part, God will have none ; so the whole falleth to his share alone. My heart, when it is both whole and at the best, is but a strait and unworthy lodging for God. If it were bigger and better, I would reserve it all for him. Satan may look in at my doors by a temptation, but he shall not have so much as one chamber-room set apart for him to sojourn in.

VI. I see that, in natural motions, the nearer any thing comes to its end, the swifter it moveth. I have seen great rivers, which, at their first rising out of some hill's side, might be covered with a bushel ; which, after many miles, fill a very broad channel ; and, drawing near to the sea, do even make a little sea in their own banks : so the wind, at the first rising, is a little vapour from the crannies of the earth, and, passing forward about the earth, the further it goes, the more blustering and violent it waxeth. A Christian's motion, after he is regenerate, is made natural to God-ward ; and therefore the nearer he comes to heaven, the more zealous he is. A good man must be like the sun ; not like Hezekiah's sun, that went back-

ward, nor like Joshua's sun that stood still ; but David's sun that, like a bridegroom, comes out of his chamber, and, as a champion, rejoiceth to run his race. Only herein is the difference, that when he comes to his high noon, he declineth not. However therefore the mind, in her natural faculties, follows the temperature of the body, yet in these supernatural things, she quite crosses it ; for with the coldest complexion of age is joined, in those that are truly religious, the most fervent zeal and affection to good things ; which is therefore the more revered and better acknowledged, because it cannot be ascribed to the hot spirits of youth. The devil himself devised that old slander of early holiness, "A young saint, an old devil." Sometimes, young devils have proved old saints ; never the contrary ; but true saints in youth do always prove angels in their age. I will strive to be ever good ; but if I should not find myself best at last, I should fear I was never good at all.

VII. Consent hearteneth sin, which a little dislike would have daunted at first. As we say, "There would be no thieves, if no receivers ;" so would there not be so many mouths open to detract and slander, if there were not as many open ears to entertain them. If I cannot stop other men's mouths from speaking ill, I will either open my mouth to reprove it, or else I will stop mine ears from hearing it ; and let the slanderer see in my face, that he hath no room in my heart.

VIII. I have oft wondered how fishes can retain their fresh taste, and yet live in salt waters ; since I see that every other thing participates of the nature of the place wherein it abides : so the waters, passing through the channels of the earth, vary their savour with the veins of soil through which they slide : so brute creatures, transported from one region to another, alter their former quality, and degenerate by little and little. The like danger have I seen in the manners of men, conversing with evil companions in corrupt places ; for, besides that it blemishes our reputation and makes us thought ill though we be good, it breeds in us an insensible declination to ill ; and works in us, if not an approbation, yet a less dislike of those sins, to which our ears and eyes are

so continually innured. I may have a bad acquaintance; I will never have a wicked companion.

IX. Expectation, in a weak mind, makes an evil greater, and a good less; but, in a resolved mind, it digests an evil before it come, and makes a future good long before present. I will expect the worst, because it may come; the best, because I know it will come.

X. Some promise what they cannot do; as Satan to Christ: some, what they could, but mean not to do; as the sons of Jacob to the Shechemites; some, what they meant for the time, and afterwards retract; as Laban to Jacob: some, what they do also give, but unwillingly; as Herod: some, what they willingly give and after repent them; as Joshua to the Gibeonites—so great distrust is there in man, whether from his impotency or faithlessness. As in other things, so in this, I see God is not like man: but in whatever he promises, he approves himself most faithful both in his ability and performances. I will therefore ever trust God on his bare word; even with hope, besides hope, above hope, against hope; and onwards, I will rely on him for small matters of this life; for how shall I hope to trust him in impossibilities, if I may not in likelihoods? How shall I depend on him for raising my body from dust, and saving my soul, if I mistrust him for a crust of bread towards my preservation?

XI. If the world would make me his minion, he could give me but what he hath; and what hath he to give, but a smoke of honour, a shadow of riches, a sound of pleasures, a blast of fame; which when I have had in the best measure, I may be worse, I cannot be better? I can live no whit longer, no whit merrier, no whit happier. If he profess to hate me, what can he do, but disgrace me in my name, impoverish me in my estate, afflict me in my body? in all which, it is easy not to be ever the more miserable. I have been too long beguiled with the vain semblances of it: now, henceforth, accounting myself born to a better world, I will, in a holy loftiness, bear myself as one too good to be enamoured of the best pleasures, to be daunted with the greatest miseries, of this life.

XII. I see there is no man so happy, as to have all things; and no man so miserable, as not to have some.

Why should I look for a better condition than all others? If I have somewhat, and that of the best things, I will in thankfulness enjoy it, and want the rest with contentment.

XIII. Constraint makes an easy thing toilsome; whereas, again, love makes the greatest toil pleasant. How many miles do we ride and run, to see one silly beast follow another, with pleasure; which if we were commanded to measure, upon the charge of a superior, we should complain of weariness! I see the folly of most men, who make their lives miserable and their actions tedious, for want of love to that they must do. I will first labour to settle in my heart a good affection to heavenly things; so, Lord, thy yoke shall be easy, and thy burden light.

XIV. I am a stranger even at home; therefore, if the dogs of the world bark at me, I neither care, nor wonder.

XV. It is the greatest madness in the world to be a hypocrite in religious profession. Men hate thee, because thou art a Christian so much as in appearance: God hates thee double, because thou art but in appearance: so, whilst thou hast the hatred of both, thou hast no comfort in thyself. Yet if thou wilt not be good, as thou seemest, I hold it better to seem ill, as thou art. An open wicked man doth much hurt with notorious sins; but a hypocrite doth at last more shame goodness by seeming good. I would rather be an openly wicked man, than a hypocrite; but I would rather be no man, than either of them.

XVI. When I cast down mine eyes upon my wants, upon my sins, upon my miseries, methinks no man should be worse, no man so ill as I, my means so many, so forcible, and almost violent; my progress so small and insensible; my corruptions so strong; my infirmities so frequent, and remediless; by body so unanswerable to my mind. But when I look up to the blessings that God hath enriched me withal, methinks I should soon be induced to think none more happy than myself. God is my Friend and my Father; the world, not my master, but my slave. I have friends, not many, but so tried, that I dare trust them; an estate, not superfluous, not needy, yet nearer to defect than abundance; a calling, if despised of men, yet honourable with God; a body, not so strong as to admit security, but often checking me in occasion of pleasure,

nor yet so weak as to afflict me continually; a mind, not so furnished with knowledge, that I may boast of it, nor yet so naked that I should despair of obtaining it: my miseries afford me joy; mine enemies, advantage: my account is cast up for another world. And if thou think I have said too much good of myself, either I am thus, or I would be thus.

XVII. The worldling's life is, of all others, most discomfortable; for that which is his God, doth not alway favour him; that which should be, never.

XVIII. There are three messengers of death, casualty, sickness, age. The two first are doubtful, since many have recovered them both; the last is certain. The two first are sudden; the last leisurely and deliberate. As for all men, upon so many summonses, so especially for an old man, it is a shame to be unprepared for death; for where others see they may die, he sees he must die. I was long ago old enough to die; but if I live till age, I will think myself too old to live longer.

XIX. I will not care what I have, whether much or little. If little, my account will be the less; if more, I will do the more good and receive the more glory.

XX. I care not for any companion, but such as may teach me somewhat or learn somewhat of me. Both these shall much pleasure me; one as an agent, the other as a subject to work upon. Neither know I, whether more: for though it be an excellent thing to learn, yet I learn but to teach others.

XXI. If the earth, which is provided for mortality and is possessed by the Maker's enemies, have so much pleasure in it, that worldlings think it worth the account of their heaven; such a sun to enlighten it, such a heaven to wall it about, such sweet fruits and flowers to adorn it, such variety of creatures for the commodious use of it; what must heaven needs be, that is provided for God himself and his friends? How can it be less in worth, than God is above his creatures, and God's friends better than his enemies? I will not only be content, but desirous, to be dissolved.

XXII. It is commonly seen, that boldness puts men forth before their time, before their ability. Wherein we

have seen many that, like lapwings and partridges, have run away with some part of their shell on their heads: whence it follows, that, as they began boldly, so they proceed unprofitably, and conclude not without shame. I would rather be haled by force of others to great duties, than rush upon them unbidden. It were better a man should want work, than that great works should want a man answerable to their weight.

XXIII. I will use my friends as Moses did his rod. While it was a rod, he held it familiarly in his hand; when once a serpent, he ran away from it.

XXIV. I have seldom seen much ostentation and much learning met together. The sun, rising and declining, makes long shadows; at mid-day when he is at highest, none at all. Besides that, skill, when it is too much shown, loseth the grace; as fresh coloured wares, if they be often opened, lose their brightness, and are soiled with much handling. I would rather applaud myself for having much that I shew not, than that others should applaud me for shewing more than I have.

XXV. An ambitious man is the greatest enemy to himself of any in the world besides; for he still torments himself with hopes, and desires, and cares, which he might avoid, if he would remit of the height of his thoughts, and live quietly. My only ambition shall be, to rest in God's favour on earth, and to be a saint in heaven.

XXVI.—There was never a good thing easily come by. The heathen man could say, "God sells knowledge for sweat;" and so he doth honour for jeopardy. Never any man hath got either wealth or learning with ease. Therefore the greatest good must needs be most difficult. How shall I hope to get Christ, if I take no pains for him? And if, in all other things, the difficulty of obtaining whets the mind so much the more to seek, why should it in this alone daunt me? I will not care what I do, what I suffer, so I may win Christ. If men can endure such cutting, such lancing, and searing of their bodies, to protract a miserable life yet a while longer, what pain should I refuse for eternity?

XXVII. If I die, the world will miss me but a little; I shall miss it less. Not it me, because it hath such store of

better men ; not I it, because it hath so much ill, and I shall have so much happiness.

XXVIII. Two things make a man set by, dignity and desert. Amongst fools, the first without the second is sufficient; amongst wise men, the second without the first. Let me deserve well, though I be not advanced. The conscience of my worth shall cheer me more in others' contempt, than the approbation of others can comfort me against the secret check of my own unworthiness.

XXIX. The best qualities do so cleave to their subjects, that they cannot be communicated to others: for whereas patrimony and vulgar account of honour follow the blood in many generations, virtue is not traduced in propagation, nor learning bequeathed by our will to our heirs, lest the givers should wax proud and the receivers negligent. I will account nothing my own, but what I have gotten; nor that my own, because it is more of gift than desert.

XXX. Then only is the church most happy, when truth and peace kiss each other; and then miserable, when either of them balk the way, or when they meet and kiss not; for truth without peace is turbulent, and peace without truth is secure injustice. Though I love peace well, yet I love main truths better; and though I love all truths well, yet I would rather conceal a small truth, than disturb a common peace.

XXXI. An indiscreet good action is little better than a discreet mischief: for in this, the doer wrongs only the patient; but in that other, the wrong is done to the good action; for it both makes a good thing odious (as many good tales are marred in telling,) and besides it prejudices a future opportunity. I will rather let pass a good gale of wind, and stay on the shore, than launch forth, when I know the wind will be contrary.

XXXII. The world teacheth me, that it is madness to leave behind me those goods that I may carry with me; Christianity teacheth me, that what I charitably give alive, I carry with me dead; and Experience teacheth me, that what I leave behind, I lose. I will carry that treasure with me by giving it, which the worldling loseth by keeping it; so while his corpse shall carry nothing but a winding cloth to his grave, I shall be richer under the earth, than I was above it.

XXXIII. Every worldling is a hypocrite; for while his face naturally looks upward to heaven, his heart grovels beneath on the earth: yet, if I would admit of any discord in the inward and outward parts, I would have a heart that should look up to heaven in a holy contemplation of the things above, and a countenance cast down to the earth in humiliation. This dissimilitude only is pleasing to God.

XXXIV. The heart of man is a short word, a small substance, scarcely enough to give a kite one meal; yet great in capacity: yea, so infinite in desire, that the round globe of the world cannot fill the three corners of it. When it desires more, and cries, "Give, give," I will set it over to that infinite good, where, the more it hath, it may desire more, and see more to be desired. When it desires but what it needeth, my hands shall soon satisfy it; for, if either of them may contain it, when it is without the body; much more may both of them fill it, while it is within.

XXXV. With men it is a good rule, to try first, and then to trust; with God it is contrary. I will first trust him, as most wise, omnipotent, merciful; and try him afterwards. I know it is as impossible for him to deceive me, as not to be.

XXXVI. As Christ was both a lamb and a lion, so is every Christian; a lamb, for patience in suffering, and innocence of life; a lion, for boldness in his innocency. I would so order my courage and mildness, that I may be neither lion-like in my conversation, nor sheepish, in the defence of a good cause.

XXXVII. The godly sow in tears and reap in joy. The seed-time is commonly waterish and lowering. I will be content with a wet spring, so that I may be sure of a clear and joyful harvest.

XXXVIII. Every man hath a heaven and a hell. Earth is the wicked man's heaven; his hell is to come. On the contrary, the godly have their hell upon earth, where they are vexed with temptations and afflictions, by Satan and his accomplices; their heaven is above, in endless happiness. If it be ill with me on earth, it is well my torment is so short and so easy. I will not be so covetous, as to hope for two heavens.

XXXIX. Man on his death-bed, hath a double pros-

pect, which, in his lifetime the interposition of pleasure and miseries debarred him from. The good man looks upward, and sees heaven open, with Stephen and the glorious angels ready to carry up his soul; the wicked man looks downward, and sees three terrible spectacles, death, judgment, hell, one beyond another; and all to be passed through by his soul. I marvel not, that the godly have been so cheerful in death, that those torments whose very sight hath overcome the beholders, have seemed easy to them. I marvel not, that a wicked man is so loth to hear of death, so dejected when he feeleth sickness, and so desperate when he feeleth the pangs of death; nor that every Balaam would fain die the death of the righteous. Henceforth I will envy none but a good man; I will pity nothing so much, as the prosperity of the wicked.

XL. Not to be afflicted is a sign of weakness; for therefore God imposeth no more on me, because he sees I can bear no more. God will not make choice of a weak champion. When I am stronger, I will look for more; and when I sustain more, it shall more comfort me, that God finds me strong, than it shall grieve me, to be pressed with a heavy affliction.

XLI. That the wicked have peace in themselves, is no wonder; they are as sure, as temptation can make them. No prince makes war with his own subjects. The godly are still enemies; therefore they must look to be assaulted both by stratagems and violence. Nothing shall more joy me, than my inward unquietness. A just war is a thousand times more happy than an ill-conditioned peace.

XLII. Goodness is so powerful, that it can make things simply evil (namely, our sins) good to us; not good in nature, but good in the event; good, when they are done, not good to be done. Sin is so powerful, that it can turn the holiest ordinances of God into itself. But herein our sin goes beyond our goodness, that sin defiles a man or action otherwise good, but all the goodness of the world cannot justify one sin: as the holy flesh in the skirt, makes not the bread holy that toucheth it, but the unclean, touching a holy thing, defileth it. I will loath every evil for its own sake; I will do good, but not trust to it.

XLIII. Fools measure good actions by the event, after they are done; wise men, beforehand, by judgment, upon the rules of reason and faith. Let me do well; let God take charge of the success. If it be well accepted, it is well; if not, my thank is with God.

XLIV. He was never a good man, that amends not: for if he were good, he must needs desire to be better. Grace is so sweet, that whoever tastes of it must needs long after more; and if he desire it, he will endeavour it; and if he do but endeavour, God will crown it with success. God's family admitteth of no dwarfs, which are unthriving and stand at a stay; but men of measures. Whatever become of my body or my estate, I will ever labour to find somewhat added to the stature of my soul.

XLV. Pride is the most dangerous of all sins; for it is both most insinuate, having crept into heaven and paradise, and most dangerous where it is; for whereas all other temptations are about evil, this alone is conversant only about good things; and one dram of it poisons many measures of grace. I will not be more afraid of doing good things amiss, than of being proud when I have well performed them.

XLVI. Not only commission makes a sin. A man is guilty of all those sins he hateth not. If I cannot avoid all, yet I will hate all.

XLVII. Prejudice is so great an enemy to truth, that it makes the mind incapable of it. In matters of faith, I will first lay a sure ground, and then believe, though I cannot argue; holding the conclusion, in spite of the premises: but in other less matters, I will not so forestal my mind with resolution, as that I will not be willing to be better informed. Neither will I say in myself, "I will hold it, therefore it shall be truth;" but, "This is truth, therefore I will hold it." I will not strive for victory, but for truth.

XLVIII. Drunkenness and covetousness do much resemble one another; for the more a man drinks, the more he thirsteth; and the more he hath, still the more he coveteth. And as for their effects, besides other, both of them have the power of transforming a man into a beast; and, of all other beasts, into a swine. The former is evident to sense; the other, though more obscure, is no more ques-

tionable. The covetous man, in two things, plainly resembleth a swine—that he ever roots in the earth, not so much as looking towards heaven—that he never doth good, till his death. In desiring, my rule shall be, necessity of nature or estate. In having, I will account that my good, which doeth me good.

XLIX. I acknowledge no master of requests in heaven, but one, Christ, my Mediator. I know I cannot be so happy, as not to need him; nor so miserable, that he should condemn me. I will always ask; and that of none, but where I am sure to speed; but where there is so much store, that when I have had the most, I shall leave no less behind. Though numberless drops be in the sea, yet, if one be taken out of it, it hath so much the less, though insensibly; but God, because he is infinite, can admit of no diminution. Therefore are men niggardly, because the more they give, the less they have; but thou, Lord, mayest give what thou wilt, without abatement of thy store. Good prayers never came weeping home. I am sure I shall receive, either what I ask, or what I should ask.

L. I see that a fit booty, many times, makes a thief; and many would be proud, if they had but the common causes of their neighbours. I account this none of the least favours of God, that the world goes no better forward with me; for I fear, if my estate were better to the world, it might be worse to God. As it is a happy necessity that enforceth to good, so is that next happy, that hinders from evil.

LI. It is the basest love of all others, that is for a benefit; for herein we love not another, so much as ourselves. Though there were no heaven, O Lord, I would love thee: now there is one, I will esteem it, I will desire it; yet still I will love thee, for thy goodness' sake. Thyself is reward enough, though thou broughtest no more.

LII. I see men point the field, and desperately jeopard their lives, being prodigal of their blood in the revenge of a disgraceful word, against themselves, while they can be content to hear God pulled out of heaven with blasphemy, and not feel so much as a rising of their blood: which argues our cold love to God, and our over fervent affection to ourselves. In mine own wrongs, I

will hold patience laudable; but in God's injuries, impious.

LIII. It is a hard thing to speak well, but it is harder to be well silent, so as it may be free from suspicion of affectation, or sullenness, or ignorance; else loquacity, and not silence, would be a note of wisdom. Herein I will not care how little, but how well. He said well for this, "Not that which is much, is well; but that which is well, is much."

LIV. There is nothing more odious, than fruitless old age. Now, for that no tree bears fruit in autumn unless it blossom in the spring, to the end that my age may be profitable and laden with ripe fruit, I will endeavour, that my youth may be studious and flowered with the blossoms of learning and observation.

LV. Revēge commonly hurts both the offerer and sufferer: as we see in the foolish bee, (though in all other things commendable, yet herein the pattern of fond spitefulness) which, in her anger, envenometh the flesh and loseth her sting, and so lives a drone ever after. I account it the only valour to remit a wrong; and will applaud it to myself as right noble and Christian, that I might hurt and will not.

LVI. He that lives well, cannot choose but die well; for if he die suddenly, yet he dies not unpreparedly; if by leisure, the conscience of his well-led life makes his death more comfortable. But it is seldom seen, that he who liveth ill, dieth well; for the conscience of his former evils, his present pain, and the expectation and fear of greater, so take up his heart, that he cannot seek God. And now it is just with God, not to be sought, or not to be found: because he sought to him in his life-time, and was repulsed. Whereas therefore there are usually two main cares of good men, to live well and die well; I will have but this one, to live well.

LVII. With God there is no free man, but his servant, though in the gallies; no slave, but the sinner, though in a palace; none noble, but the virtuous, if never so basely descended; none rich, but he that possesseth God, even in rags; none wise, but he that is a fool to himself and the world; none happy, but he whom the world pities.

Let me be free, noble, rich, wise, happy to God : I pass not what I am to the world.

LVIII. When the mouth praiseth, man heareth ; when the heart, God heareth. Every good prayer knocketh at heaven for a blessing ; but an importunate prayer pierceth it, though as hard as brass, and makes way for itself into the ears of the Almighty. And as it ascends lightly up, carried with the wings of faith, so it comes ever laden down again upon our heads. In my prayers, my thoughts shall not be guided by my words, but my words shall follow my thoughts.

LIX. If that servant were condemned for evil, that gave God no more than his own which he had received, what shall become of them that rob God of his own ? If God gain a little glory by me, I shall gain more by him. I will labour so to husband the stock that God hath left in my hands, that I may return my soul better than I received it, and that he may make it better than I return it.

LX. Heaven is compared to a hill, and therefore is figured by Olympus among the heathen, by mount Sion in God's book ; Hell, contrariwise to a pit. The ascent to the one is hard therefore, and the descent of the other, easy and headlong ; and so, that if we once begin to fall, the recovery is most difficult ; and not one of many, stays, till he comes to the bottom. I will be content to pant, and blow, and sweat in climbing up to heaven ; as, contrarily, I will be wary of setting the first step downward towards the pit ; for, as there is a Jacob's ladder into heaven, so there are blind stairs that go winding down into death, whereof each makes way for other. From the object is raised an ill suggestion ; suggestion draws on delight ; delight, consent ; consent, endeavour ; endeavour, practice ; practice, custom ; custom, excuse ; excuse, defence ; defence, obstinacy ; obstinacy, boasting of sin ; boasting, a reprobate sense. I will watch over my ways : and do thou, Lord, watch over me, that I may avoid the first degrees of sin. And if those overtake my frailty, yet keep me, that presumptuous sins prevail not over me. Beginnings are with more ease and safety declined, when we are free ; than proceedings, when we have begun.

LXI. It is fitter for youth, to learn than to teach ; and for age, to teach than to learn ; and yet fitter for an old man to learn, than to be ignorant. I know, I shall never know so much, that I cannot learn more ; and I hope I shall never live so long, as till I be too old to learn.

LXII. I never loved those salamanders that are never well, but when they are in the fire of contention. I will rather suffer a thousand wrongs, than offer one : I will suffer a hundred, rather than return one : I will suffer many, ere I will complain of one, and endeavour to right it by contending. I have ever found, that to strive with my superior, is furious ; with my equal, doubtful ; with my inferior, sordid and base ; with any, full of unquietness.

LXIII. The praise of a good speech standeth in words and matter ; matter, which is as a fair and well-featured body ; elegance of words, which is as a neat and well-fashioned garment. Good matter, slubbered up in rude and careless words, is made loathsome to the hearer ; as a good body, mis-shapen with unhandsome clothes. Elegancy, without soundness, is no better than a nice vanity. Although therefore most bearers are like bees, that go all to the flowers, never regarding the good herbs that are of as wholesome use, as the other of fair shew : yet let my speech strive to be profitable ; plausible, as it happens. Better the coat be mis-shapen, than the body.

LXIV. I see that as black and white colours to the eyes, so is the vice and virtue of others to the judgment of men. Vice gathers the beams of the sight in one, that the eye may see it and be intent upon it ; virtue scatters them abroad, and therefore hardly admits of a perfect apprehension. Whence it comes to pass, that, as judgment is according to sense, we do so soon espy, and so earnestly censure a man for, one vice ; letting pass many laudable qualities undiscerned, or, at least, unacknowledged. Yea, whereas every man is once a fool, and doeth that perhaps in one fit of his folly, which he shall at leisure repent of, (as Noah, in one hour's drunkenness, uncovered those secrets which were hid six hundred years before) the world is hereupon ready to call in question all his former integrity, and to exclude him from the hope of any future

amendment. Since God hath given me two eyes, the one shall be busied about the present fault that I see, with a detesting commiseration; the other, about the commendable qualities of the offender, not without an impartial approbation of them. So shall I do God no wrong, in robbing him of the glory of his gifts mixed with infirmities; nor yet, in the mean time, encourage vice, while I do distinctly reserve for it a due portion of hatred.

LXV. God is above man; the brute creatures, under him; he, set in the midst. Lest he should be proud that he had finite creatures under him, that one is infinite degrees above him. I do therefore owe awe unto God; mercy, to the inferior creatures, knowing, that they are my fellows in respect of creation; whereas there is no proportion betwixt me and my Maker.

LXVI. One said, "It is good to inure the mouth to speak well, for good speech is many times drawn into the affection:" but I should fear that speaking well without feeling, were the next way to procure an habitual hypocrisy. Let my good words follow good affections; not go before them. I will therefore speak as I think; but withal I will labour to think well; and then I know, I cannot but speak well.

LXVII. When I consider my soul, I could be proud to think of how divine a nature and quality it is; but when I cast down mine eyes to my body, as the swan to her black legs, and see what loathsome matter issues from the mouth, nostrils, ears, pores, and other passages, and how most carrion-like of all other creatures it is after death; I am justly ashamed, to think that so excellent a guest dwells not in a more cleanly dunghill.

LXVIII. Every worldling is a madman; for, besides that he preferreth profit and pleasure to virtue, the world to God, earth to heaven, time to eternity, he pampers the body, and starves the soul. He feeds one fowl a hundred times, that it may feed him but once; and seeks all lands and seas for dainties; not caring whether any, or what repast, he provideth for his soul. He clothes the body with all rich ornaments, that it may be as fair without as it is filthy within; while his soul goes bare and naked, having not a rag of knowledge to cover it. Yea, he cares

not to destroy his soul, to please the body; when, for the salvation of the soul, he will not so much as hold the body short of the least pleasure. What is, if this be not, a reasonable kind of madness? Let me enjoy my soul no longer, than I prefer it to my body. Let me have a deformed, lean, crooked, unhealthful, neglected body; so that I may find my soul sound, strong, well furnished, well disposed both for earth and heaven.

LXIX. Asa was sick but of his feet, far from the heart; yet because he sought to the physicians, not to God, he escaped not. Hezekiah was sick to die: yet because he trusted to God, not to physicians, he was restored. Means, without God, cannot help; God, without means, can, and often doth. I will use good means; not rest in them.

LXX. A man's best monument is his virtuous actions. Foolish is the hope of immortality and future praise by the cost of senseless stone; when the passenger shall only say, "Here lies a fair stone and a filthy carcase." That only can report thee rich; but for other praises, thyself must build thy monument, alive, and write thy own epitaph in honest and honourable actions; which are so much more noble than the other, as living men are better than dead stones. Nay, I know not if the other be not the way to work a perpetual succession of infamy, while the censorious reader, upon occasion thereof, shall comment upon thy bad life; whereas, in this, every man's heart is a tomb, and every man's tongue writeth an epitaph upon the well-behaved. Either I will procure me such a monument to be remembered by, or else it is better to be inglorious, than infamous.

LXXI. The basest things are ever most plentiful. History and experience tell us, that some kind of mouse breedeth one hundred and twenty young ones in one nest, whereas the lion, or elephant, beareth but one at once. I have ever found, that the least wit yieldeth the most words. It is both the surest and wisest way to speak little, and think more.

LXXII. An evil man is clay to God, wax to the devil. God may stamp him into powder, or temper him anew; but none of his means can melt him. Contrariwise, a good man is God's wax, and Satan's clay. He relents at

every look of God, but is not stirred at any temptation. I would rather bow than break to God; but as for Satan or the world, I would rather be broken in pieces with their violence, than suffer myself to be bowed unto their obedience.

LXXIII. It is an easy matter for a man to be careless of himself, and yet much easier to be enamoured of himself; for if he be a Christian, while he contemneth the world perfectly, it is hard for him to reserve a competent measure of love to himself; if a worldling, it is not possible but he must over-love himself. I will strive for the mean of both; and so hate the world, that I may care for myself; and so care for myself, that I be not in love with the world.

LXXIV. I will hate popularity and ostentation, as ever dangerous, but most of all in God's business; which whoso affect, do as ill spokesmen, who, when they are sent to woo for God, speak for themselves. I know how dangerous it is to have God my rival.

LXXV. Earth affords no sound contentment; for what is there under heaven not troublesome, besides that which is called pleasure? and, that, in the end, I find most irksome of all other. My soul shall ever look upward for joy, and downward for penitence.

LXXVI. God is ever with me, ever before me. I know, he cannot but over-see me always, though my eyes be held that I see him not; yea, he is still within me, though I feel him not: neither is there any moment, that I can live without God. Why do I not, therefore, always live with him? Why do I not account all hours lost, wherein I enjoy him not?

LXXVII. There is no man so happy as the Christian. When he looks up unto heaven, he thinks, "That is my home. The God that made it and owns it, is my Father; the angels, more glorious in nature than myself, are my attendants; mine enemies are my vassals." Yea, those things which are the most terrible of all to the wicked, are most pleasant to him. When he hears God thunder above his head, he thinks, "This is the voice of my Father." When he remembereth the tribunal of the last judgment, he thinks, "It is my Saviour that sits in it:" when death, he esteems it but as the angel set before paradise, which,

with one blow, admits him to eternal joy. And, which is most of all, nothing in earth or hell can make him miserable. There is nothing in the world worth envying, but a Christian.

LXXVIII. As man is a little world, so every Christian is a little church within himself. As the church therefore is sometimes in the wane through persecution; at other times, in her full glory and brightness; so let me expect myself sometimes drooping under temptations, and sadly hanging down the head for the want of the feeling of God's presence; at other times, carried with the full sail of a resolute assurance to heaven: knowing, that as it is a church at the weakest stay, so shall I, in my greatest dejection, hold the child of God.

LXXIX. Temptations on the right hand are more perilous, than those on the left; and destroy a thousand, to the others' ten: as the sun more usually causeth the traveller to cast off his cloak, than the wind. For those on the left hand miscarry men but two ways—to distrust and denial of God; more rare sins—but the other, to all the rest, wherewith men's lives are so commonly defiled. The spirit of Christians is like the English jet, whereof we read, that it is fired with water, quenched with oil. And these two, prosperity and adversity, are like heat and cold: the one gathers the powers of the soul together, and makes them able to resist by uniting them; the other diffuses them, and, by such separation, makes them easier to conquer. I hold it therefore as praise-worthy with God, for a man to contemn a proffered honour or pleasure for conscience' sake, as, on the rack, not to deny his profession. When these are offered, I will not nibble at the bait, that I be not taken with the hook.

LXXX. God is Lord of my body also; and therefore challengeth as well reverent gesture, as inward devotion. I will ever, in my prayers, either stand, as a servant, before my Master; or kneel, as a subject, to my Prince.

LXXXI. I have not been in others' breasts, but, for my own part, I never tasted of ought that might deserve the name of pleasure. And if I could, yet a thousand pleasures cannot countervail one torment; because the one may be exquisite; the other, not without composition.

And if not one torment, much less a thousand. And if not for a moment, much less for eternity. And if not the torment of a part, much less of the whole ; for, if the pain but of a tooth be so intolerable, what shall the racking of the whole body be ? And, if of the body, what shall that be, which is primarily of the soul ? If there be pleasures that I hear not of, I will be wary of buying them so over-dear.

LXXXII. As hypocrisy is a common counterfeit of all virtues, so there is no special virtue, which is not, to the very life of it, seemingly resembled by some special vice. So devotion is counterfeited by superstition ; good thrift, by niggardliness ; charity, by vain-glorious pride ; for, as charity is bounteous to the poor, so is vain-glory to the wealthy ; as charity sustains all for truth, so pride, for a vain praise ; both of them make a man courteous and affable. So the substance of every virtue is in the heart : which, since it hath not a window made into it by the Creator of it, but is reserved under lock and key for his own view, I will judge only by appearance. I would rather wrong myself by credulity, than others by unjust censures and suspicions.

LXXXIII. Every man hath a kingdom within himself. Reason, as the princess, dwells in the highest and inwardest room. The senses are the guard and attendants on the court, without whose aid, nothing is admitted into the presence. The supreme faculties, as will and memory, are the peers. The outward parts and inward affections are the commons. Violent passions are as rebels, to disturb the common peace. I would not be a stoic, to have no passions, for that were to overthrow this inward government God hath erected in me ; but a Christian, to order those I have. And for that I see, that as, in commotions, one mutinous person draws on more, so, in passions, that one makes way for the extremity of another, as excess of love causeth excess of grief upon the loss of what we loved ; I will do as wise princes use, to those they misdoubt for faction ; so hold them down and keep them bare, that their very impotency and remissness shall afford me security.

LXXXIV. I look upon the things of this life, as an

owner, as a stranger; as an owner, in their right; as a stranger, in their use. I see that owning is but a conceit, besides using. I can use, as I lawfully may, other men's commodities as my own; walk in their woods, look on their fair houses, with as much pleasure as my own. Yet, again, I will use my own, as if it were another's, knowing that though I hold it by right, yet it is only by tenure at will.

LXXXV. There is none like to Luther's three masters, prayer, temptation, meditation. Temptation stirs up holy meditation; meditation prepares to prayer; and prayer makes profit of temptation, and fetcheth all divine knowledge from heaven. Of others, I may learn the theory of divinity; of these only, the practice. Other masters teach me by rote to speak, parrot-like, of heavenly things; these alone, with feeling and understanding.

LXXXVI. Affectation is the greatest enemy both of doing well, and good acceptance of what is done. I hold it the part of a wise man to endeavour rather that fame may follow him, than go before him.

LXXXVII. I see a number who with Shimei, while they seek their servant, which is riches, lose their souls. No worldly things shall draw me without the gates, within which God hath confined me.

LXXXVIII. It is a hard thing for a man to find weariness in pleasure, while it lasteth; or contentment in pain, while he is under it: after both indeed it is easy. Yet both of these must be found in both; or else we shall be drunken with pleasures, and overwhelmed with sorrow. As those therefore who would eat some dish over-deliciously sweet, do allay it with tart sauce, that they may not be cloyed; and those who are to receive bitter pills, that they may not be annoyed with their unpleasing taste, roll them in sugar; so, in all pleasures, it is best to labour, not how to make them most delightful, but how to moderate them from excess; and, in all sorrows, so to settle our hearts in true grounds of comfort, that we may not care so much for being bemoaned of others, as how to be most contented in ourselves.

LXXXIX. In ways, we see travellers choose not the fairest and greenest, if it be either cross or contrary, but

the nearest, though miry and uneven. So, in opinions, let me follow not the plausiblest, but the truest, though more perplexed.

XC. Christian society is like a bundle of sticks laid together, whereof one kindles another. Solitary men have fewest provocations to evil; but, again, fewest incitations to good. So much as doing good is better than not doing evil, will I account Christian good-fellowship better than an eremitish and melancholy solitariness.

XCI. I would rather confess my ignorance, than falsely profess knowledge. It is no shame not to know all things, but it is a just shame to over-reach in any thing.

XCII. Sudden extremity is a notable trial of faith, or any other disposition of the soul; for as, in a sudden fear, the blood gathers to the heart, for the guarding of that part which is principal; so the powers of the soul combine themselves in a hard exigent, that they may be easily judged of. The faithful, more suddenly than any casualty, can lift up his heart to his stay in heaven; whereas the worldling stands amazed and distraught with the evil, because he hath no refuge to fly unto; for, not being acquainted with God in his peace, how should he but have him to seek in his extremity? When therefore some sudden stitch girds me in the side, like to be the messenger of death; or when the sword of my enemy, in an unexpected assault, threatens my body; I will seriously note how I am affected: so the suddenest evil, as it shall not come unlooked for, shall not go away unthought of. If I find myself courageous and heavenly-minded, I will rejoice in the truth of God's grace in me, knowing that one dram of tried faith is worth a whole pound of speculative; and that which once stood by me, will never fail me. If dejected and heartless, herein I will acknowledge cause of humiliation; and, with all care and earnestness, seek to store myself against the dangers following.

XCIII. The rules of civil policy may well be applied to the mind. As therefore for a prince, that he may have good success against either rebels or foreign enemies, it is a sure axiom, "Divide and rule;" but when he is once seated in the throne over loyal subjects, "Unite and rule:" so in the regiment of the soul, there must be variance set

in the judgment, and the conscience, and affections, that that which is amiss, may be subdued ; but when all parts are brought to order, it is the only course to maintain their peace, that all seeking to establish and help each other, the whole may prosper. Always to be at war is desperate ; always at peace, secure and over-epicure-like. I do account a secure peace a just occasion of this civil dissension in myself ; and a true Christian peace, the end of all my secret wars ; which when I have achieved, I shall reign with comfort ; and I never will be quiet, till I have achieved it.

XCIV. I brought sin enough with me into the world to repent of all my life, though I should never actually sin ; and I sin enough actually, every day to sorrow for, though I had brought none with me into the world : but, laying both together, my time is rather too short for my repentance. It were madness in me to spend my short life in jollity and pleasure, whereof I have so small occasion ; and neglect the opportunity of my so just sorrow ; especially since before I came into the world, I sinned ; after I am gone out of the world, the contagion of my sin past shall add to the guilt of it : yet, in both these states, I am incapable of repentance. I will do that while I may, which, when I have neglected it, is unrecoverable.

XCV. Ambition is torment enough for an enemy ; for it affords as much discontent in enjoying, as in want ; making men like poisoned rats, which, when they have tasted of their bane, cannot rest till they drink ; and then can much less rest, till their death. It is better for me to live in the wise men's stocks, in a contented want ; than in a fool's paradise, to vex myself with wilful unquietness.

XCVI. It is not possible, but a conceited man must be a fool ; for that overweening opinion he hath of himself, excludes all opportunity of purchasing knowledge. Let a vessel be once full of never so base liquor, it will not give room to the costliest, but spills beside whatever is infused. The proud man, though he be empty of good substance, yet is full of conceit. Many men had proved wise, if they had not so thought themselves. I am empty enough to receive knowledge enough. Let me think myself but so bare as I am, and more I need not. O

Lord, do thou teach me how little, how nothing I have ; and give me no more, than I know I want.

XCVII. Every man hath his turn of sorrow ; whereby, some more, some less, all men are in their times miserable. I never yet could meet with the man, that complained not of somewhat. Before sorrow comes, I will prepare for it ; when it is come, I will welcome it ; when it goes, I will take but half a farewell of it, as still expecting its return.

XCVIII. There be three things that follow an injury, so far as it concerneth ourselves, for, as the offence toucheth God, it is above our reach—revenge, censure, satisfaction ; which must be remitted by the merciful man ; yet not all at all times : but revenge always, leaving it to him that can and will do it ; censure, oftentimes ; satisfaction, sometimes. He that deceives me oft, though I must forgive him, yet charity binds me not, not to censure him for untrusty ; and he that hath endamaged me much, cannot plead breach of charity in my seeking restitution. I will so remit wrongs as I may not encourage others to offer them : and so retain them, as I may not induce God to retain mine to him.

XCIX. Garments that have once one rent in them, are subject to be torn on every nail and every brier : and glasses that are once cracked, are soon broken : such is a man's good name, once tainted with just reproach. Next to the approbation of God and the testimony of mine own conscience, I will seek for a good reputation with men ; not by close carriage, concealing faults, that they may not be known to my shame ; but avoiding all vices, that I may not deserve it. The efficacy of the agent is in the patient well disposed. It is hard for me ever to do good, unless I be reputed good.

C. Many vegetable and many brute creatures exceed man in length of age : which hath opened the mouths of heathen philosophers, to accuse nature, as a step-mother to man, that hath given him the least time to live, who only could make use of his time in getting knowledge. But herein religion doth most magnify God in his wisdom and justice, teaching us, that other creatures live long and perish to nothing : only man recompenses the shortness of his life, with eternity after it ; that the sooner he dies

well, the sooner he comes to perfection of knowledge, which he might in vain seek below ; the sooner he dies ill, the less hurt he doth with his knowledge. There is great reason then, why man should live long ; greater, why he should die early. I will never blame God for making me too soon happy ; for changing my ignorance, for knowledge ; my corruption, for immortality ; my infirmities, for perfection. " Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

CENTURY II.

I. A MAN under God's affliction, is like a bird in a net ; the more he striveth, the more he is entangled. God's decree cannot be eluded with impatience. What I cannot avoid, I will learn to bear.

II. I find that all worldly things require a long labour in getting, and afford a short pleasure in enjoying them. I will not care much for what I have ; nothing, for what I have not.

III. I see natural bodies forsake their own place and condition, for the preservation of the whole ; but of all other creatures, man, and of all other men, Christians, have the least interest in themselves. I will live as given to others, lent only to myself.

IV. That which is said of the elephant, that, being guilty of his deformity, he cannot abide to look on his own face in the water, but seeks for troubled and muddy channels ; we see well moralized in men of evil conscience, who know their souls are so filthy, that they dare not so much as view them ; but shift off all checks of their former iniquity with vain excuses of good fellowship. Whence it is, that every small reprehension so galls them ; because it calls the eyes of the soul home to itself, and makes them see a glimpse of what they would not. So have I seen a foolish and timorous patient, who, knowing his wound very deep, would not endure the surgeon to search it : whereon what can ensue but a festering of the part, and a danger of the whole body ? So I have seen

many prodigal wasters run so fast in books, that they cannot abide to hear of reckoning. It hath been an old and true proverb, "Oft and even reckonings make long friends." I will oft sum up my estate with God that I may know what I have to expect, and answer for. Neither shall my score run on so long with God, that I shall not know my debts, or fear an audit, or despair of payment.

V. I account this body nothing but a close prison to my soul, and the earth a larger prison to my body. I may not break prison, till I be loosed by death; but I will leave it not unwillingly, when I am loosed.

VI. The common fears of the world are causeless and ill-placed. No man fears to do ill; every man to suffer ill; wherein, if we consider it well, we shall find that we fear our best friends. For my part, I have learned more of God and of myself, in one week's extremity, than all my whole life's prosperity had taught me afore. And in reason and common experience, prosperity usually makes us forget our death; adversity on the other side, makes us neglect our life. Now if we measure both of these by their effects, forgetfulness of death makes us secure, neglect of this life makes us careful of a better. So much therefore as neglect of life is better than forgetfulness of death, and watchfulness better than security, so much more beneficial will I esteem adversity than prosperity.

VII. Even grief itself is pleasant to the remembrance, when it is once past; as joy is, while it is present. I will not therefore, in my conceit, make any so great difference betwixt joy and grief, since grief past is joyful, and long expectation of joy is grievous.

VIII. Every sickness is a little death. I will be content to die oft, that I may die once well.

IX. Oft times those things which have been sweet in opinion, have proved bitter in experience. I will therefore ever suspend my resolute judgment, until the trial and event; in the mean while, I will fear the worst, and hope the best.

X. In all divine and moral good things, I would fain keep that I have, and get that I want. I do not more loath all other covetousness, than I affect this. In all these

things alone, I profess never to have enough. If I may encrease them therefore, either by labouring, or begging, or usury, I shall leave no means unattempted.

XI. Some children are of that nature, that they are never well, but while the rod is over them. Such am I to God. Let him beat me, so he amend me. Let him take all away from me, so he give me himself.

XII. There must not be one uniform proceeding with all men, in reprehension; but that must vary, according to the disposition of the reprov'd. I have seen some men as thorns, which, easily touched, hurt not; but if hard and unwarily, fetch blood of the hand: others, as nettles, which, if they be nicely handled, sting and prick; but, if hard and roughly pressed, are pulled up without harm. Before I take any man in hand, I will know whether he be a thorn or a nettle.

XIII. I will account no sin little, since there is not the least, but works out the death of the soul. It is all one whether I be drowned in the ebber shore, or in the midst of the deep sea.

XIV. It is a base thing to get goods, to keep them. I see that God, who only is infinitely rich, holdeth nothing in his own hands, but gives all to his creatures. But if we will needs lay up, where should we rather repose it, than in Christ's treasury? The poor man's hand is the treasury of Christ. All my superfluity shall be there hoarded up, where I know it will be safely kept, and surely returned to me.

XV. The school of God and of nature require two contrary manners of proceeding. In the school of nature, we must conceive, and then believe; in the school of God, we must first believe, and then we shall conceive. He that believes no more than he conceives, can never be a Christian; nor he a philosopher, that assents without reason. In nature's school, we are taught to bolt out the truth by logical discourse; God cannot endure a logician: in his school, he is the best scholar, that reasons least, and assents most. In divine things, what I may, I will conceive; the rest I will believe and admire. Not a curious head, but a credulous and plain heart, is accepted with God.

XVI. No worldly pleasure hath any absolute delight in it; but as a bee, having honey in the mouth, hath a sting in the tail. Why am I so foolish, to rest my heart upon any of them; and not rather labour to aspire to that one absolute good, in whom is nothing savouring of grief, nothing wanting to perfect happiness?

XVII. A sharp reproof I account better, than a smooth deceit. Therefore, when my friend checks me, I will respect it with thankfulness; when others flatter me, I will suspect it, and rest in my own censure of myself, who should be more privy and less partial to my own deservings.

XVIII. Extremity distinguisheth friends. Worldly pleasures, like physicians, give us over, when once we lie a dying: and yet the death-bed had most need of comforts. Christ Jesus standeth by his in the pangs of death, and, after death, at the bar of judgment; not leaving them either in their bed or grave. I will use them therefore to my best advantage; not trust them. But for thee, O my Lord, who in mercy and truth canst not fail me, whom I have found ever faithful and present in all extremities, kill me, yet will I trust in thee!

XIX. We have heard of so many thousand generations passed, and we have seen so many hundreds die within our knowledge, that I wonder any man can make account to live one day. I will die daily. It is not done before the time, which may be done at all times.

XX. Desire oftentimes make us unthankful; for whoso hopes for that he hath not, usually forgets that which he hath. I will not suffer my heart to rove after high or impossible hopes; lest I should, in the mean time, contemn present benefits.

XXI. In hoping well, in being ill, and fearing worse, the life of man is wholly consumed. When I am ill, I will live in hope of better; when well, in fear of worse: neither will I, at any time, hope without fear, lest I should deceive myself with too much confidence; wherein, evil shall be so much more unwelcome and intolerable, because I looked for good: nor, again, fear without hope, lest I should be over-much dejected: nor do either of them, without true contentation.

XXII. What is man to the whole earth? What is earth

to the heaven? What is heaven to his Maker? I will admire nothing in itself, but all things in God, and God in all things.

XXIII. There be three usual causes of ingratitude upon a benefit received, envy, pride, covetousness—envy, looking more at others' benefits than our own—pride, looking more at ourselves than the benefit—covetousness, looking more at what we would have than what we have. In good turns, I will neither respect the giver, nor myself, nor the gift, nor others; but only the intent and good will, from whence it proceeded. So shall I requite others' great pleasures with equal good-will, and accept of small favours with great thankfulness.

XXIV. Whereas the custom of the world is to hate things present, to desire future, and magnify what is past; I will, contrarily, esteem that which is present, best; for both what is past was once present, and what is future will be present: future things, next, because they are present in hope: what is past, least of all, because it cannot be present; yet somewhat, because it was.

XXV. We pity the folly of the lark, which, while it playeth with the feather and stoopeth to the glass, is caught in the fowler's net; and yet cannot see ourselves alike made fools by Satan, who, deluding us by the vain feathers and glasses of the world, suddenly enwrappeth us in his snares. We see not the nets indeed; it is too much that we shall feel them, and that they are not so easily escaped after as before avoided. "O Lord, keep thou mine eyes from beholding vanity." And though mine eyes see it, let not my heart stoop to it, but loath it afar off. And if I stoop at any time and be taken, set thou my soul at liberty; that I may say, "My soul is escaped, even as a bird out of the snare of the fowler: the snare is broken, and I am delivered."

XXVI. In suffering evil, to look to secondary causes, without respect to the Highest, maketh impatience; for so we bite at the stone; and neglect him that threw it. If we take a blow of our equal, we return it with usury; if of a prince, we repine not. What matter is it, if God kill me, whether he do it by an ague, or by the hand of a tyrant? Again, in expectation of good, to look to the first

cause, without care of the second, argues idleness and causeth want. As we cannot help ourselves without God, so God will not ordinarily help us without ourselves. In both, I will look up to God, without repining at the means in one, or trusting them in the other.

XXVII. If my money were another man's, I could but keep it; only the expending shews it my own. It is greater glory, comfort, and gain, to lay it out well, than to keep it safely. God hath made me, not his treasurer, but his steward.

XXVIII. Augustin's friend, Nebridius, not unjustly hated a short answer to a weighty and difficult question, because the disquisition of great truths requires time, and the determining is perilous. I will as much hate a tedious and far-fetched answer to a short and easy question; for, as that other wrongs the truth, so this the hearer.

XXIX. Performance is a binder. I will request no more favour of any man, than I must needs. I will rather choose to make an honest shift, than overmuch enthrall myself by being beholden.

XXX. The world is a stage; every man an actor, and plays his part here either in a comedy or tragedy. The good man is a comedian, who, however he begins, ends merrily: but the wicked man acts a tragedy, and therefore ever ends in horror. Thou seest a wicked man vaunt himself on his stage: stay till the last act, and look to his end, as David did, and see whether that be peace. Thou wouldest make strange tragedies, if thou wouldest have but one act. Who sees an ox, grazing in a fat and rank pasture, and thinks not that he is near to the slaughter? whereas the lean beast, that toils under the yoke, is far enough from the shambles. The best wicked man cannot be so envied in his first shews, as he is pitiable in the conclusion.

XXXI. Of all objects of beneficence, I will choose either an old man or a child, because these are most out of hope to requite. The one forgets a good turn, the other lives not to repay it.

XXXII. That which Pythagoras said of philosophers, is more true of Christians; for Christianity is nothing but a divine and better philosophy; "Three sorts of men

come to the market, buyers, sellers, lookers-on. The two first are both busy and carefully distracted about their market; only the third live happily, using the world as if they used it not."

XXXIII. There be three things, which, of all other, I will never strive for, the wall, the way, the best seat. If I deserve well, a low place cannot disparage me so much as I shall grace it; if not, the height of my place will add to my shame, while every man will condemn me of pride, matched with unworthiness.

XXXIV. I see there is not so much difference betwixt a man and a beast, as betwixt a Christian and a natural man; for whereas man lives but one life of reason above the beast, a Christian lives four lives, above a natural man—the life of inchoate regeneration by grace, the perfect life of imputed righteousness, the life of glory begun in the separation of the soul, the life of perfect glory in the society of the body with the soul in full happiness: the worst whereof is better by many degrees, than the best life of a natural man; for, whereas the dignity of the life is measured by the cause of it, (in which regard the life of the plant is basest, because it is but from the juice, arising from the root, administered by the earth; the life of the brute creature better than it, because it is sensitive; of a man better than it, because reasonable,) and the cause of this life is the Spirit of God; so far as the Spirit of God is above reason, so far doth a Christian exceed a mere naturalist. I thank God much, that he hath made me a man; but more, that he hath made me a Christian: without which, I know not whether it had been better for me to have been a beast, or not to have been.

XXXV. Great men's favours, friends' promises, and dead men's shoes, I will esteem, but not trust to.

XXXVI. It is a fearful thing to sin; more fearful to delight in sin; yet worse to defend it; but worse than worst to boast of it. If therefore I cannot avoid sin, because I am a man; yet I will avoid the delight, defence, and boasting of sin, because I am a Christian.

XXXVII. Those things which are most eagerly desired, are most hardly both gotten and kept, God commonly

crossing our desires in what we are over-fervent. I will therefore account all things as too good to have, so nothing too dear to lose.

XXXVIII. A true friend is not born every day. It is best to be courteous to all, entire with few; so may we perhaps have less cause of joy; I am sure, less occasion of sorrow.

XXXIX. Secrecies, as they are a burden to the mind ere they be uttered, so are they no less charge to the receiver when they are uttered. I will not long after more inward secrets, lest I should procure doubt to myself and jealous fear to the discloser; but, as my mouth shall be shut with fidelity not to blab them, so my ear shall not be too open to receive them.

XL. As good physicians by one receipt make way for another, so is it the safest course in practice. I will reveal a great secret to none, but whom I have found faithful in less.

XLI. I will enjoy all things in God, and God in all things; nothing in itself: so shall my joys neither change, nor perish; for however the things themselves may alter or fade, yet he in whom they are mine, is ever like himself, constant and everlasting.

XLII. If I would provoke myself to contentation, I will cast down my eyes to my inferiors, and there see better men in worse condition; if to humility, I will cast them up to my betters, and so much more deject myself to them, by how much more I see them thought worthy to be respected of others, and deserve better in themselves.

XLIII. True virtue rests in the conscience of itself, either for reward or censure. If therefore I know myself upright, false rumours shall not daunt me; if not answerable to the good report of my favourers, I will myself find the first fault, that I may prevent the shame of others.

XLIV. I will account virtue the best riches; knowledge, the next; riches, the worst; and therefore will labour to be virtuous and learned, without condition. As for riches, if they fall in my way, I refuse them not; but if not, I desire them not.

XLV. An honest word I account better than a careless

oath. I will say nothing, but what I dare swear and will perform. It is a shame for a Christian to abide his tongue a false servant, or his mind a loose mistress.

XLVI. There is a just and easy difference to be put betwixt a friend and an enemy, betwixt a familiar and a friend; and much good use to be made of all, but of all, with discretion. I will disclose myself no whit to my enemy, somewhat to my friend, wholly to no man; lest I should be more others', than mine own. Friendship is brittle stuff. How know I, whether he that now loves me, may not hate me hereafter?

XLVII. No man, but is an easy judge of his own matters; and lookers-on oftentimes see the more. I will therefore submit myself to others in what I am reprov'd; but in what I am praised, only to myself.

XLVIII. I will not be so merry as to forget God, nor so sorrowful as to forget myself.

XLIX. As nothing makes so strong and mortal hostility, as discord in religions, so nothing in the world unites men's hearts so firmly, as the bond of faith; for whereas there are three grounds of friendship, virtue, pleasure, profit; and, by all confessions, that is the surest, which is upon virtue; it must needs follow, that what is grounded on the best and most heavenly virtue, must be the safest; which, as it unites man to God so inseparably, that no temptations, no torments, not all the gates of hell can sever him; so it unites one Christian soul to another so firmly, that no outward occurrences, no imperfections in the party loved, can dissolve them. If I love not the child of God for his own sake, for his Father's sake, more than my friend for my commodity or my kinsman for blood, I never received any spark of true heavenly love.

L. The good duty that is deferred upon a conceit of present unfitness, at last grows irksome, and thereupon altogether neglected. I will not suffer my heart to entertain the least thought of lothness towards the task of devotion, wherewith I have stinted myself; but violently break through any motion of unwillingness, not without a deep check to myself for my backwardness.

LI. Hearing is a sense of great apprehension, yet far more subject to deceit, than seeing; not in the manner

of apprehending, but in the uncertainty of the object. Words are vocal interpreters of the mind, actions real; and therefore, however both should speak according to the truth of what is in the heart, yet words do more belie the heart, than actions. I care not what words I hear, when I see deeds. I am sure what a man doth, he thinketh; not so always, what he speaketh. Though I will not be so severe a censor, that for some few evil acts I should condemn a man of false-heartedness, yet in common course of life, I need not be so mopish, as not to believe rather the language of the hand, than of the tongue. He that says well and doth well, is without exception commendable, but if one of these must be severed from the other, I like him well that doth well and saith nothing.

LII. That which they say of the pelican, that when the shepherds, in desire to catch her, lay fire not far from her nest, which she finding, and fearing the danger of her young, seeks to blow out with her wings so long till she burns herself, and makes herself a prey in an unwise pity to her young; I see morally verified in experience, of those who indiscreetly meddling with the flame of dissension kindled in the church, rather increase, than quench it; rather fire their own wings, than help others. I would rather bewail the fire afar off, than stir in the coals of it. I would not grudge my ashes to it, if those might abate the burning; but since I see it is daily increased with partaking, I will behold it with sorrow; and meddle no otherwise, than by prayers to God and entreaties to men; seeking my own safety and the peace of the church, in the freedom of my thought and silence of my tongue.

LIII. That which is said of Lucilla's faction, that anger bred it, pride fostered it, and covetousness confirmed it, is true of all schisms, though with some inversion; for the most are bred through pride, while men, upon a high conceit of themselves, scorn to go in the common road, and affect singularity in opinion; are confirmed through anger, while they stomach and grudge any contradiction; and are nourished through covetousness, while they seek ability to bear out their part. In some others, again,

covetousness obtains the first place; anger, the second; pride, the last. Herein therefore I have been always wont to commend and admire the humility of those great and profound wits, whom depth of knowledge hath not led to by-paths in judgment; but, walking in the beaten path of the church, have bent all their forces to the establishment of received truths; accounting it greater glory to confirm an ancient verity, than to devise a new opinion, though never so profitable, unknown to their predecessors. I will not reject a truth for mere novelty; old truths may come newly to light; neither is God tied to times, for the gift of his illumination: but I will suspect a novel opinion of untruth, and not entertain it, unless it may be deduced from ancient grounds.

LIV. The ear and the eye are the mind's receivers; but the tongue is only busied in expending the treasure received. If therefore the revenues of the mind be uttered as fast or faster than they are received, it cannot be but that the mind must needs be held bare, and can never lay up for purchase: but if the receivers take in still with no utterance, the mind may soon grow a burden to itself, and unprofitable to others. I will not lay up too much and utter nothing, lest I be covetous; nor spend much and store up little, lest I be prodigal and poor.

LV. It is a vain-glorious flattery for a man to praise himself; an envious wrong, to detract from others. I will speak no ill of others, no good of myself.

LVI. That which is the misery of travellers, to find many hosts and few friends, is the estate of Christians in their pilgrimage to a better life. Good friends may not therefore be easily forgone: neither must they be used as suits of apparel, which, when we have worn threadbare, we cast off and call for new. Nothing, but death or villainy, shall divorce me from an old friend; but still I will follow him so far as is either possible or honest; and then I will leave him with sorrow.

LVII. True friendship necessarily requires patience; for there is no man in whom I shall not mislike somewhat, and who shall not, as justly, mislike somewhat in me. My friend's faults therefore, if little, I will swallow and

because he is his tormentor ; of God's creatures, because they, joining with their Maker, fight against him ; of himself, because he bears about him his own accuser and executioner. The godly man, contrarily, is afraid of nothing ; not of God, because he knows him his best friend, and therefore will not hurt him ; not of Satan, because he cannot hurt him ; not of afflictions, because he knows they proceed from a loving God, and end to his own good ; not of the creatures, since the very stones of the field are in league with him ; not of himself, since his conscience is at peace. A wicked man may be secure, because he knows not what he hath to fear ; or desperate through extremity of fear ; but truly courageous he cannot be. Faithlessness cannot choose but be false-hearted. I will ever by my courage take trial of my faith. By how much more I fear, by so much less I believe.

LXXV. The godly man lives hardly, and, like the ant, toils here during the summer of his peace, holding himself short of his pleasures, as looking to provide for a hard winter, which, when it comes, he is able to wear out comfortably : whereas the wicked man doth prodigally lash out all his joys in the time of his prosperity, and, like the grasshopper, singing merrily all summer, is starved in winter. I will so enjoy the present, that I will lay up more for hereafter.

LXXVI. I have wondered oft, and blushed for shame, to read in mere philosophers, who had no other mistress but nature, such strange resolution in the contempt of both fortunes, as they call them ; such notable precepts for a constant settledness and tranquillity of mind : and to compare it with my own disposition and practice ; whom I have found too much drooping and dejected under small crosses, and easily again carried away with little prosperity :—to see such courage and strength to contemn death, in those who thought they wholly perished in death ; and to find such faint-heartedness in myself, at the first conceit of death, who yet am thoroughly persuaded of the future happiness of my soul. I have the benefit of nature, as well as they, besides infinite more helps that they wanted. O the dulness and blindness of us unworthy Christians, that suffer heathens, by the dim candle-light of nature, to

go further than we by the clear sun of the gospel, that an indifferent man could not tell by our practice whether were the Pagan ! Let me never, for shame, account myself a Christian, unless my art of Christianity have imitated and gone beyond nature so far, that I can find the best heathen as far below me in true resolution, as the vulgar sort were below them : else I may shame religion ; it can neither honest nor help me.

LXXVII. If I would be irreligious and unconscionable, I would make no doubt to be rich ; for if a man will defraud, dissemble, forswear, bribe, oppress, serve the time, make use of all men for his own turn, make no scruple of any wicked action for his advantage, I cannot see how he can escape wealth and preferment ; but for an upright man to rise, is difficult, while his conscience straitly curbs him in from every unjust action, and will not allow him to advance himself by indirect means. So riches come seldom easily to a good man ; seldom hardly, to the conscienceless. Happy is that man that can be rich with truth, or poor with contentment. I will not envy the gravel in the unjust man's throat. Of riches, let me never have more than an honest man can bear away.

LXXVIII. God is the God of order, not of confusion. As therefore, in natural things, he useth to proceed from one extreme to another, by degrees, through the mean, so doth he in spiritual. The sun riseth not at once to his highest from the darkness of midnight, but first sends forth some feeble glimmering of light in the dawning ; then looks out with weak and waterish beams ; and so, by degrees, ascends to the midst of heaven. So in the seasons of the year, we are not one day scorched with a summer heat, and, on the next, frozen with a sudden extremity of cold ; but winter comes on softly, first by cold dews, then hoar frosts, until at last it descend to the hardest weather of all. Such are God's spiritual proceedings. He never brings any man from the estate of sin to the estate of glory, but through the state of grace. And as for grace, he seldom brings a man from gross wickedness to any eminence of perfection. I will be charitably jealous of those men, who from notorious lewdness leap at once into a sudden forwardness of profession. Holiness doth not, like Jonah's

gourd, grow up in a night. I like it better, to go on soft and sure, than, for a hasty fit, to run myself out of wind, and afterwards stand still and breathe me.

LXXIX. It hath been said of old, "to do well and hear ill, is princely;" which as it is most true, by reason of the envy which follows upon justice, so is the contrary justified by many experiments. To do ill and to hear well, is the fashion of many great men; to do ill, because they are borne out with the assurance of impunity; to hear well, because of abundance of parasites, who, as ravens to a carcase, gather about great men. Neither is there any so great misery in greatness as this, that it conceals men from themselves; and when they will needs have a sight of their own actions, it shews them a false glass to look in. Meanness of state, that I can find, hath none so great inconvenience. I am no whit sorry, that I am rather subject to contempt, than flattery.

LXXX. There is no earthly blessing so precious, as health of body; without which, all other worldly good things are but troublesome. Neither is there any thing more difficult, than to have a good soul in a strong and vigorous body; for it is commonly seen, that the worse part draws away the better: but to have a healthful and sound soul in a weak sickly body, is no novelty; while the weakness of the body is a help to the soul, playing the part of a perpetual monitor to incite it to good and check it for evil. I will not be over-glad of health, nor over-fearful of sickness. I will more fear the spiritual hurt that may follow upon health, than the bodily pain that accompanies sickness.

LXXXI. There is nothing more troublesome to a good mind, than to do nothing; for besides the furtherance of our estate, the mind doth both delight and better itself with exercise. There is but this difference then betwixt labour and idleness, that labour is a profitable and pleasant trouble; idleness, a trouble both unprofitable and comfortless. I will be ever doing something, that either God when he cometh, or Satan when he tempteth, may find me busied. And yet since, as the old proverb is, "Better it is to be idle than effect nothing," I will not more hate doing nothing, than doing something to no

purpose. I shall do good but a while: let me strive to do it while I may.

LXXXII. A faithful man hath three eyes; the first, of sense, common to him with brute creatures; the second, of reason, common to all men; the third, of faith, proper to his profession: whereof each looketh beyond other, and none of them meddleth with others' objects; for neither doth the eye of sense reach to intelligible things and matters of discourse, nor the eye of reason to those things which are supernatural and spiritual; neither doth faith look down to things that may be sensibly seen. If thou discourse to a brute beast of the depths of philosophy never so plainly, he understands not, because they are beyond the view of his eye which is only of sense: if to a mere carnal man, of divine things, he perceiveth not the things of God, neither indeed can do, because they are spiritually discerned; and therefore no wonder, if those things seem unlikely, incredible, impossible to him, which the faithful man, having a proportionable means of apprehension, doth as plainly see, as his eye doth any sensible thing. Tell a plain countryman, that the sun, or some higher or lesser star, is much bigger than his cart-wheel, or at least so many scores bigger than the whole earth, he laughs thee to scorn, as affecting admiration with a learned untruth; yet the scholar, by the eye of reason, doth as plainly see and acknowledge this truth, as that his hand is bigger than his pen. What a thick mist, yea, what a palpable and more than Egyptian darkness doth the natural man live in! What a world is there, that he doth not see at all! and how little doth he see in this, which is his proper element! There is no bodily thing, but the brute creatures see as well as he, and some of them better. As for his eye of reason, how dim is it in those things, which are best fitted to it! What one thing is there in nature, which he doth perfectly know? What herb, or flower, or worm that he treads on, is there, whose true essence he knoweth? No; not so much as what is in his own bosom; what it is, where it is, or whence it is, that gives being to himself. But as for those things which concern the best world, he doth not so much as confusedly see them, neither knoweth whether

they be. He sees no whit into the great and awful majesty of God. He discerns him not in all his creatures, filling the world with his infinite and glorious presence. He sees not his wise providence, overruling all things, disposing all casual events, ordering all sinful actions of men to his own glory. He comprehends nothing of the beauty, majesty, power, and mercy of the Saviour of the world, sitting in his humanity at his Father's right-hand. He sees not the unspeakable happiness of the glorified souls of the saints. He sees not the whole heavenly commonwealth of angels, ascending and descending to the behoof of God's children, waiting upon them at all times invisibly, not excluded by closeness of prisons nor desolateness of wildernesses; and the multitude of evil spirits, passing and standing by him to tempt him unto evil: but, like unto the foolish bird when he hath hid his head that he sees nobody, he thinks himself altogether unseen, and then counts himself solitary, when his eye can meet with no companion. It was not without cause, that we call a mere fool a natural; for however worldlings have still thought Christians God's fools, we know them the fools of the world. The deepest philosopher that ever was, saving the reverence of the schools, is but an ignorant sot to the simplest Christian; for the weakest Christian may, by plain information, see somewhat into the greatest mysteries of nature, because he hath the eye of reason common with the best; but the best philosopher, by all the demonstration in the world, can conceive nothing of the mysteries of godliness, because he utterly wants the eye of faith. Though my insight into matters of the world be so shallow, that my simplicity moveth pity or maketh sport unto others, it shall be my contentment and happiness, that I see further into better matters. That which I see not, is worthless, and deserves little better than contempt; that which I see, is unspeakable, inestimable, for comfort, for glory.

LXXXIII. It is not possible for an inferior to live at peace, unless he have learned to be contemned; for the pride of his superiors, and the malice of his equals and inferiors, shall offer him continual and inevitable occasions of unquietness. As contentation is the mother of

inward peace with ourselves, so is humility the mother of peace with others; for if thou be vile in thine own eyes first, it shall the less trouble thee to be accounted vile of others. So that a man of a high heart, in a low place, cannot want discontentment; whereas a man of lowly stomach can swallow and digest contempt without any distemper; for wherein can he be the worse for being contemned, who, out of his own knowledge of his deserts, did most of all condemn himself? I should be very improvident, if, in this calling, I did not look for daily contempt; wherein "we are made a spectacle to the world, to angels, and men." When it comes, I will either embrace it or condemn it; embrace it, when it is within my measure; when above, condemn it; so embrace it, that I may more humble myself under it; and so condemn it, that I may not give heart to him that offers it, nor disgrace him for whose cause I am contemned.

LXXXIV. Christ raised three dead men to life; one, newly departed; another, on the bier; a third, smelling in the grave; to shew us, that no degree of death is so desperate, that it is past help. My sins are many and great; yet if they were more, they are far below the mercy of him that hath remitted them, and the value of his ransom that hath paid for them. A man hurts himself most by presumption; but we cannot do God a greater wrong, than to despair of forgiveness. It is a double injury to God, first, that we offend his justice by sinning; then, that we wrong his mercy with despairing.

LXXXV. For a man to be weary of the world through miseries that he meets with, and for that cause to covet death, is neither difficult nor commendable, but rather argues a base weakness of mind. So it may be a cowardly part to condemn the utmost of all terrible things, in a fear of lingering misery. But for a man, either living happily here on earth or resolving to live miserably, yet to desire his removal to heaven, doth well become a true Christian courage, and argues a notable mixture of patience and faith; of patience, for that he can and dare abide to live sorrowfully; of faith, for that he is assured of his better being elsewhere, and therefore prefers the absent joys he looks for, to those he feels in present. No

sorrow shall make me wish myself dead, that I may not be at all; no contentment shall hinder me from wishing myself with Christ, that I may be happier.

LXXXVI. It was not for nothing that the wise Creator of all things hath placed gold, and silver, and all precious minerals under our feet, to be trod upon; and hath hid them low in the bowels of the earth, that they cannot without great labour be either found, or gotten; whereas he hath placed the noblest part of his creation above our heads, and that so open to our view, that we cannot choose but every moment behold them. Wherein what did he else intend, but to draw away our minds from these worthless and yet hidden treasures, to which he foresaw we should be too much addicted; and to call them to the contemplation of those better things, which, beside their beauty, are more obvious to us; that in them we might see and admire the glory of their Maker, and withal seek our own? How do those men wrong themselves and misconstrue God, who, as if he had hidden these things because he would have them sought and laid the other open for neglect, bend themselves wholly to the seeking of these earthly commodities; and do no more mind heaven, than if there were none! If we could imagine a beast to have reason, how could he be more absurd in his choice? How easy is it to observe, that still the higher we go, the more purity and perfection we find! So earth is the very dross and dregs of all the elements; water somewhat more pure than it, yet also more feculent than the air above it; the lower air less pure than the uppermost regions; and yet they are as far inferior to the lowest heavens; which again are more exceeded by the glorious and empyreal seat of God, which is the heaven of the just. Yet these brutish men take up their rest, and place their felicity, in the lowest and worst of all God's workmanship; not regarding that which, with its own glory, can make them happy. Heaven is the proper place of my soul. I will send it up thither continually in my thoughts, while it sojourns with me, before it go to dwell there for ever.

LXXXVII. A man need not to care for more knowledge, than to know himself. He needs no more plea-

sure, than to content himself; no more victory, than to overcome himself; no more riches, than to enjoy himself. What fools are they, that seek to know all other things, and are strangers to themselves! that seek altogether to satisfy others' humours with their own displeasure! that seek to vanquish kingdoms and countries, when they are not masters of themselves! that have no hold of their own hearts, yet seek to be possessed of all outward commodities! Go home to thyself, first, vain heart: and when thou hast made sure work there, in knowing, contenting, overcoming, enjoying thyself, spend all the superfluity of thy time and labour upon others.

LXXXVIII. It was an excellent rule that fell from Epicurus, whose name is odious to us for the father of looseness, that if a man would be rich, honourable, aged, he should not strive so much to add to his wealth, reputation, years, as to detract from his desires; for certainly in these things, which stand most upon conceit, he hath the most, that desireth least. A poor man that hath little and desires no more, is, in truth, richer than the greatest monarch, that thinks he hath not what he should or what he might, or that grieves there is no more to have. It is not necessity, but ambition, that sets men's hearts on the rack. If I have meat, drink, apparel, I will learn therewith to be content. If I had the world full of wealth beside, I could enjoy no more than I use: the rest could please me no otherwise, but by looking on. And why can I not thus solace myself while it is others'?

LXXXIX. An inconstant and wavering mind, as it makes a man unfit for society, (for that there can be no assurance of his words or purposes, neither can we build on them without deceit) so, besides that it makes a man ridiculous, hinders him from ever attaining any perfection in himself, for a rolling stone gathers no moss; and the mind, whilst it would be every thing, proves nothing; oft changes cannot be without loss: yea, it keeps him from enjoying that which he hath attained; for it keeps him ever in work, building, pulling down, selling, changing, buying, commanding, forbidding. So while he can be no other man's friend, he is the least his own. It is the safest course for a man's profit, credit, and ease, to

deliberate long, to resolve surely, hardly to alter ; not to enter upon that whose end he foresees not answerable ; and, when he is once entered, not to surcease till he have attained the end he foresaw. So may he, to good purpose, begin a new work, when he hath well finished the old.

XC. The way to heaven is like that which Jonathan and his armour-bearer passed, betwixt two rocks ; one Bozel, the other Seneh ; that is foul and thorny, whereto we must make shift to climb on our hands and knees ; but, when we are come up, there is victory and triumph. God's children have three suits of apparel, whereof two are worn daily on earth, the third laid up for them in the wardrobe of heaven ; they are ever either in black, mourning ; in red, persecuted ; or in white, glorious. Any way shall be pleasant to me, that leads unto such an end. It matters not what rags or what colours I wear with men, so I may walk with my Saviour in white, and reign with him in glory.

XCI. There is nothing more easy, than to say divinity by rote, and to discourse of spiritual matters from the tongue or pen of others : but to hear God speak it to the soul, and to feel the power of religion in ourselves, and to express it out of the truth of experience within, is both rare and hard. All that we feel not in the matters of God, is but hypocrisy ; and therefore the more we profess, the more we sin. It will never be well with me, till, in these greatest things, I be careless of others' censures, fearful only of God's and my own ; till sound experience have really catechised my heart, and made me know God and my Saviour otherwise than by words. I will never be quiet, till I can see, and feel, and taste God. My hearing I will account as only serving to effect this, and my speech only to express it.

XCII. There is no enemy can hurt us, but by our own hands. Satan could not hurt us, if our own corruption betrayed us not ; afflictions cannot hurt us, without our own impatience ; temptations cannot hurt us, without our own yieldance ; death could not hurt us, without the sting of our own sins ; sin could not hurt us, without our own impenitence. How might I defy all things, if I could obtain not to be my own enemy ! I love myself too much, and

yet not enough. O God, teach me to wish myself but so well as thou wishest me, and I am safe.

XCIII. It grieves me to see all other creatures so officious to their Maker in their kind; that both winds, and sea, and heaven, and earth obey him with all readiness; that each of these hears other, and all of them their Creator, though to the destruction of themselves: and man only is rebellious, imitating herein the evil spirits, who, in the receipt of a more excellent kind of reason, are yet more perverse. Hence it is that the prophets are oftentimes fain to turn their speech to the earth, void of all sense and life, from this living earth, informed with reason. That only which should make us more pliable, stiffeneth us. God could force us if he pleased; but he would rather incline us by gentleness. I must stoop to his power; why do I not stoop to his will? It is a vain thing to resist his voice, whose hand we cannot resist.

XCIV. As all natural bodies are mixed, so must all our moral dispositions. No simple passion doth well. If our joy be not allayed with sorrow, it is madness; and if our sorrow be not tempered with some mixture of joy, it is hellish and desperate. If, in these earthly things, we hope without all doubt, or fear without all hope, we offend on both sides; if we labour without all recreation, we grow dull and heartless; if we sport ourselves without all labour, we grow wild and unprofitable. These compositions are wholesome, as for the body, so for the mind; which, though it be not of a compounded substance as the body, yet hath much variety of qualities and affections, and those contrary to each other. I care not how simple my heavenly affections are, which, the more free they are from composition, are the nearer to God; nor how compounded my earthly, which are easily subject to extremities. If joy come alone, I will ask him for his fellow, and evermore, in spite of him, couple him with his contrary; that so, while each are enemies to other, both may be friends to me.

XCV. Joy and sorrow are hard to conceal, as from the countenance, so from the tongue. There is so much correspondence betwixt the heart and tongue, that they will move at once: every man therefore speaks of his own pleasure and care; the hunter and falconer, of his games;

the ploughman of his team; the soldier, of his march and colours. If the heart were as full of God, the tongue could not refrain to talk of him. The rareness of Christian communication argues the common poverty of grace. If Christ be not in our hearts, we are godless; if he be there without our joy, we are senseless; if we rejoice in him and speak not of him, we are shamefully unthankful. Every man taketh, yea, raiseth occasion, to bring in speech of what he liketh. As I will think of thee always, O Lord, so it shall be my joy to speak of thee often; and if I find not opportunity, I will make it.

XCIX. When I see my Saviour hanging in so forlorn a fashion upon the cross; his head drooping down; his temples bleeding with thorns, his hands and feet with the nails, and his side with the spear; his enemies round about him, mocking at his shame, and insulting over his impotence; how should I think any otherwise of him, than, as himself complaineth, forsaken of his Father? But, when again I turn mine eyes, and see the sun darkened, the earth quaking, the rocks rent, the graves opened, the thief confessing to give witness to his Deity; and when I see so strong a guard of Providence over him, that all his malicious enemies are not able so much as to break one bone of that body which seemed carelessly neglected; I cannot but wonder at his glory and safety. God is ever near, though oft unseen; and if he wink at our distress, he sleepeth not. The sense of others must not be judges of his presence and care, but our faith. What care I, if the world give me up for miserable, while I am under his secret protection? O Lord, since thou art strong in our weakness, and present in our senselessness, give me but as much comfort in my sorrow, as thou givest me security, and at my worst I shall be well.

XCVII. In sins and afflictions, our course must be contrary; we must begin to detest the greatest sin first, and descend to the hatred of the least; we must first begin to suffer small afflictions with patience, that we may ascend to the endurance of the greatest. Then alone shall I be happy, when, by this holy method, I have drawn my soul to make conscience of the least evil of sin, and not to shrink at the greatest evil of affliction.

XCVIII. Prescription is no plea against the king ; much less can long custom plead for error against that our supreme Lord, to whom a thousand years are but as yesterday. Yea, time, which pleads voluntarily for continuance of things lawful, will take no fee not to speak against an evil use. Hath an ill custom lasted long ? It is more than time it were abrogated : age is an aggravation to sin. Heresy or abuse, if it be grey-headed, deserves sharper opposition. To say “ I will do ill because I have done so,” is perilous and impious presumption. Continuance can no more make any wickedness safe, than the author of sin, no devil. If I have once sinned, it is too much ; if oft, woe be to me, if the iteration of my offence cause boldness, and not rather more sorrow, more detestation. Woe be to me and my sin, if I be not the better because I have sinned.

XCIX. It is strange to see the varieties and proportion of spiritual and bodily diets. There be some creatures that are fatted and delighted with poisons ; others live by nothing but air, and some, they say, by fire : others will taste no water, but muddy ; others feed on their fellows, or perhaps on part of themselves : others, on the excretions of nobler creatures : some search into the earth for sustenance, or dive into the waters ; others content themselves with what the upper earth yields them without violence. All these and more are answered in the palate of the soul. There be some, yea, the most, to whom sin which is of a most venomous nature, is both food and dainties ; others, that think it the only life to feed on the popular air of applause ; others, that are never well out of the fire of contentions, and that wilfully trouble all waters with their private humours and opinions ; others, whose cruelty delights in oppression and blood, yea, whose envy gnaws upon their own hearts ; others, that take pleasure to revive the wicked and foul heresies of the greater wits of the former times ; others, whose worldly minds root altogether in earthly cares, or who not content with the ordinary provision of doctrine affect obscure subtleties unknown to wiser men ; others, whose too indifferent minds feed on whatever opinion comes next to hand, without any careful disquisition of truth : so, some feed foul ; others, but few,

clean and wholesome. As there is no beast upon earth, which hath not his like in the sea, and which perhaps is not in some sort paralleled in the plants of the earth ; so there is no bestial disposition which is not answerably found in some men. Mankind therefore hath within itself its goats, chameleons, salamanders, camels, wolves, dogs, swine, moles, and whatever sorts of beasts. There are but a few men amongst men. To a wise man, the shape is not so much as the qualities. If I be not a man within, in my choices, affections, inclinations ; it had been better for me to have been a beast without. A beast is but like itself, but an evil man is half a beast, and half a devil.

C. Forced favours are thankless, and commonly with noble minds find no acceptation. For a man to give his soul to God, when he sees he can no longer hold it ; or to bestow his goods, when he is forced to part with them ; or to forsake his sin, when he cannot follow it ; are but unkind and cold obediences. God sees our necessity, and scorns our compelled offers. What man of any generous spirit will abide himself made the last refuge of a craved, denied, and constrained courtesy ? While God gives me leave to keep my soul, yet then to bequeath it to him ; and while strength and opportunity serve me to sin, then to forsake it ; is both accepted and crowned. God loves neither grudged nor necessary gifts. I will offer betimes, that he may vouchsafe to take. I will give him the best, that he may take all.

O God, give me this grace, that I may give thee myself freely and seasonably ; and then I know thou canst not but accept me, because this gift is thine own.

CENTURY III.

I. Good men are placed by God as so many stars in the lower firmament of the world. As they must imitate those heavenly bodies in their light and influence, so also in their motion. And therefore, as the planets have a course proper to themselves against the sway of the heaven that carries them about, so must each good man

have a motion out of his own judgment, contrary to the customs and opinions of the vulgar, finishing his own course with the least show of resistance. I will never affect singularity, except it be among those that are vicious. It is better to do or think well alone, than to follow a multitude in evil.

II. What strange variety of actions doth the eye of God see, at once, round about the compass of the earth, and within it! Some, building houses: some, delving for metals; some, marching in troops, or encamping one against another; some, bargaining in the market; some, travelling on their way; some, praying in their closets; others, quaffing at the tavern; some, rowing in the gallies; others, dallying in their chambers; and, in short, as many different actions as persons; yet all have one common intention of good to themselves, true, in some, but, in the most, imaginary. The glorified spirits have but one uniform work, wherein they all join, the praise of their Creator. This is one difference betwixt the saints above and below; they above are free both from business and distraction; these below are free, though not absolutely, from distraction, not at all from business. Paul could think of the cloak that he left at Troas, and of the shaping of his skins for his tents; yet, through these, he looked still at heaven. This world is made for business. My actions must vary according to occasions. My end shall be but one! and the same now on earth, that it must be one day in heaven.

III. To see how the martyrs of God died, and the life of their persecutors, would make a man out of love with life, and out of all fear of death. They were flesh and blood as well as we; life was as sweet to them, as to us; their bodies were as sensible of pain, as ours; we go to the same heaven with them. How comes it then, that they were so courageous in abiding such torments in their death, as the very mention strikes horror into any reader; and we are so cowardly in encountering a fair and natural death? If this valour had been of themselves, I would never have looked after them in hope of imitation: now, I know it was he, for whom they suffered and that suffered in them, which sustained them. They were of themselves

as weak as I ; and God can be as strong in me, as he was in them. O Lord thou art not more unable to give me this grace, but I am more unworthy to receive it ; and yet thou regardest not worthiness, but mercy. Give me their strength, and what end thou wilt.

IV. Our first age is all in hope. When we are in the womb, who knows whether we shall have our right shape and proportion of body, being neither monstrous nor deformed ? When we are born, who knows whether, with the due features of a man, we shall have the faculties of reason and understanding ? When yet our progress in years discovereth wit or folly, who knows whether, with the power of reason, we shall have the grace of faith to be Christians ? and when we begin to profess well, whether it be a temporary and seeming, or a true and saving faith ? Our middle age is half in hope for the future, and half in proof for that is past : our old age is out of hope, and altogether in proof. In our last times therefore we know both what we have been, and what to expect. It is good for youth to look forward, and still to propound the best things unto itself ; for an old man to look backward, and to repent him of that wherein he hath failed, and to recollect himself for the present ; but in my middle age, I will look both backward and forward, comparing my hopes with my proof, redeeming the time ere it be all spent, that my recovery may prevent my repentance. It is both a folly and misery to say, "This I might have done."

V. It is the wonderful mercy of God both to forgive us our debts to him in our sins, and to make himself a debtor to us in his promises : so that now, both ways, the soul may be sure, since he neither calleth for those debts which he hath once forgiven, nor withdraweth those favours and that heaven which he hath promised : but as he is a merciful creditor to forgive, so he is a true debtor to pay whatsoever he hath undertaken. Whence it is come to pass, that the penitent sinner owes nothing to God but love and obedience ; and God owes still much and all to him ; for he owes as much as he hath promised ; and what he owes by virtue of his blessed promise, we may challenge. O infinite mercy ! He that lent us all that we have, and in whose debt-books we run hourly forward

till the sum be endless, yet owes us more and bids us look for payment. I cannot deserve the least favour he can give, yet will I as confidently challenge the greatest, as if I deserved it. Promise indebteth no less, than loan or desert.

VI. It is no small commendation to manage a little well. He is a good waggoner, that can turn in a narrow room. To live well in abundance, is the praise of the estate, not of the person. I will study more how to give a good account of my little, than how to make it more.

VII. Many Christians do greatly wrong themselves with a dull and heavy kind of sullenness ; who, not suffering themselves to delight in any worldly thing, are there-upon oftentimes so heartless, that they delight in nothing. These men, like to careless guests when they are invited to an excellent banquet, lose their dainties for want of a stomach, and lose their stomach for want of exercise. A good conscience keeps always good cheer : he cannot chuse but fare well, that hath it, unless he lose his appetite with neglect and slothfulness. It is a shame for us Christians not to find as much joy in God, as worldlings do in their forced merriments, and lewd wretches in the practice of their sins.

VIII. A wise Christian hath no enemies. Many hate and wrong him, but he loves all, and all pleasure him. Those that profess love to him, pleasure him with the comfort of their society and the mutual reflection of friendship ; those, that profess hatred, make him more wary of his ways : shew him faults in himself, which his friends would either not have espied or not censured ; send him the more willingly to seek favour above ; and, as the worst do bestead him though against their wills, so he again doth voluntarily good to them. To do evil for evil, as Joab to Abner, is a sinful weakness ; to do good for good, as Ahasuerus to Mordecai, is but natural justice ; to do evil for good, as Judas to Christ, is unthankfulness and villainy ; only to do good for evil, agrees with Christian profession. And what greater work of friendship, than to do good ? If men will not be my friends in love, I will perforce make them my friends in a good use of their

hatred. I will be their friend, that are mine, and would not be.

IX. All temporal things are troublesome; for if we have good things, it is a trouble to forego them; and when we see they must be parted from, either we wish they had not been so good, or that we never had enjoyed them. Yea, it is more trouble to lose them, than it was before joy to possess them. If contrarily we have evil things, their very presence is troublesome; and still we wish that they were good, or that we were disburdened of them. So good things are troublesome in event; evil things, in their use: they, in the future; these, in the present: they, because they shall come to an end; these, because they do continue. Tell me, thy wife or thy child lies dying, and now makes up a loving and dutiful life with a kind and loving parture; whether wouldst thou rather for thy own part, she had been so good or worse? Would it have cost thee so many hearty sighs and tears, if she had been perverse and disobedient? Yet if in her life-time I put thee to this choice, thou thinkest it no choice at all in such inequality. "It is more torment," sayest thou, "to live one unquiet month, than it is pleasure to live an age in love."—Or, if thy life be yet dearer: thou hast lived to grey hairs; not hastened with care, but bred with late succession of years: thy table was ever covered with variety of dishes: thy back softly and richly clad: thou never gavest denial to either skin or stomach: thou ever favouredst thyself; and health, thee. Now death is at thy threshold, and unpartially knocks at thy door. Dost thou not wish thou hadst lived with crusts, and been clothed with rags? Wouldst not thou have given a better welcome to death, if he had found thee lying upon a pallet of straw, and supping of water-gruel, after many painful nights, and many sides changed in vain? Yet this beggarly estate thou detestest in health, and pitiest in others, as truly miserable. The sum is, a beggar wisheth he might be a monarch while he lives, and the great potentate wisheth he had lived a beggar when he comes to die; and if beggary be to have nothing, he shall be so in death, though he wished it not. Nothing therefore but eternity

can make a man truly happy, as nothing can make perfect misery but eternity; for, as temporal good things afflict us in their ending, so temporal sorrows afford us joy in the hope of their end. What folly is this in us, to seek for our trouble, to neglect our happiness! I can be but well; and this, "that I was well," shall one day be grievous. Nothing shall please me, but that once I shall be happy for ever.

X. The eldest of our forefathers lived not so much as a day to God, to whom a thousand years is as no more. We live but as an hour to the day of our forefathers; for if nine hundred and sixty were but their day, our fourscore is but as the twelfth part of it. And yet of this our hour, we live scarcely a minute to God; for take away all that time that is consumed in sleeping, dressing, feeding, talking, sporting; of that little time, there can remain not much more than nothing; yet the most seek pastimes to hasten it. Those who seek to mend the pace of time, spur a running horse. I had more need to redeem it with double care and labour, than to seek how to sell it for nothing.

XI. Each day is a new life, and an abridgment of the whole. I will so live, as if I counted every day my first and my last; as if I began to live but then, and should live no more afterwards.

XII. It was not in vain, that the ancient founders of languages used the same word in many tongues to signify both honour and charge, meaning therein to teach us the inseparable connection of these two; for there scarcely ever was any charge, without some opinion of honour; neither ever was there honour, without a charge: which two, as they are not without reason joined together in name by human institution, so they are most wisely coupled together by God in the disposition of these worldly estates. Charge, without honour to make it amends, would be too toilsome, and must needs discourage and over-lay a man; honour, without charge, would be too pleasant, and therefore would both be too much sought after, and must needs carry away the mind in the enjoying of it. Now many dare not be ambitious because of the burden, choosing rather to live obscurely and se-

curely; and yet, on the other side, those that are under it, are refreshed in the charge with the sweetness of honour. Seeing they cannot be separated, it is not the worst estate to want both. They whom thou enviest for honour, perhaps envy thee more for thy quietness.

XIII. He that taketh his own cares upon himself, loads himself in vain with an uneasy burden. The fear of what may come, expectation of what will come, desire of what will not come, and inability of redressing all these, must needs breed him continual torment. I will cast my cares upon God; he hath bidden me. They cannot hurt him; he can redress them.

XIV. Our infancy is full of folly; youth, of disorder and toil; age, of infirmity. Each time hath its burden, and that which may justly work our weariness; yet infancy longeth after youth; and youth, after more age; and he that is very old, as he is a child for simplicity, so he would be for years. I account old age the best of the three, partly for that it hath passed through the folly and disorder of the others; partly for that the inconveniencies of this are but bodily, with a bettered estate of the mind; and partly for that it is nearest to dissolution. There is nothing more miserable, than an old man that would be young again. It was an answer worthy the commendations of Petrarch, and that which argued a mind truly philosophical of him, who, when his friend bemoaned his age appearing in his white temples, telling him he was sorry to see him look so old, replied, "Nay, be sorry rather that ever I was young to be a fool."

XV. There is not the least action or event, whatever the vain epicureans have imagined, which is not overruled and disposed by a Providence; which is so far from detracting ought from the majesty of God, for that the things are small, as that there can be no greater honour to him, than to extend his providence and decree to them, because they are infinite. Neither doth this hold in natural things only, which are chained one to another by a regular order of succession; but even in those things which fall out by casualty and imprudence: whence that worthy Father, when as his speech digressed his intention to a confutation of the errors of the Manichees, could

presently guess, that, in that unpurposed turning of it, God intended the conversion of some unknown auditor; as the event proved his conjecture true ere many days. When ought falls out contrary to that I proposed, it shall content me, that God proposed it as it is fallen out; so the thing hath attained its own end, while it missed mine. I know what I would, but God knoweth what I should will. It is enough, that his will is done, though mine be crossed.

XVI. It is the most thankless office in the world to be a man's pander unto sin. In other wrongs, one man is a wolf to another; but in this, a devil. And, though, at the first, this damnable service carry away reward, yet, in conclusion, it is requited with hatred and curses; for, as the sick man, extremely distasted with a loathsome potion, hateth the very cruse wherein it was brought him; so doth the conscience, once soundly detesting sin, loath the means that induced him to commit it. Contrarily, who withstands a man in his prosecution of a sin while he doteth upon it, bears away frowns and heart-burnings for a time; but when the offending party comes to himself and right reason, he recompenseth his former dislike with so much more love, and so many more thanks. The frantic man, returned to his wits, thinks him his best friend, that bound him and beat him most. I will do my best to cross any man in his sins. If I have not thanks of him, yet of my conscience I shall.

XVII. God must be magnified in his very judgments. He looks for praise, not only from heaven, but from hell also. His justice is himself, as well as his mercy. As heaven then is for the praise of his mercy, so hell for the glory of his justice. We must therefore be so affected to judgments, as the Author of them is; who delighteth not in blood, as it makes his creature miserable, but as it makes his justice glorious. Every true Christian then must learn to sing that compound ditty of the psalmist, "of mercy and judgment." It shall not only joy me, to see God gracious and bountiful in his mercies and deliverances of his own, but also to see him terrible in vengeance to his enemies. It is no cruelty to rejoice in justice. The foolish mercy of men is cruelty to God.

XVIII. Rareness causeth wonder, and, more than that, incredulity, in those things which, in themselves, are not more admirable, than the ordinary proceedings of nature. If a blazing star be seen in the sky, every man goes forth to gaze, and spends, every evening, some time in wondering at the beams of it. That any fowl should be bred of corrupted wood resolved into worms, or that the chameleon should ever change his colours and live by air; that the ostrich should digest iron; that the phoenix should burn herself to ashes, and from thence breed a successor; we wonder, and can scarce credit. Other things more usual, no less miraculous, we know and neglect. That there should be a bird that knoweth and noteth the hours of day and night, as certainly as any astronomer by the course of heaven, if we knew not, who would believe? or that the loadstone should, by its secret virtue, so draw iron to itself, as that a whole chain of needles should all hang by insensible points at each other, only by the influence that it sends down from the first; if it were not ordinary, would seem incredible. Who would believe, when he sees a fowl mounted as high as his sight can descry it, that there were an engine to be framed, which could fetch it down into his fist? Yea, to omit infinite examples, that a little despised creature should weave nets out of her own entrails, and in her platforms of building should observe as just proportions as the best geometrician, we should suspect for an untruth, if we saw it not daily practised in our own windows. If the sun should arise but once to the earth, I doubt, every man would be a Persian, and fall down and worship it; whereas now it riseth and declineth without any regard. Extraordinary events each man can wonder at. The frequency of God's best works causeth neglect; but not that they are ever the worse for commonness, but because we are soon cloyed with the same conceit, and have contempt bred in us through familiarity. I will learn to note God's power and wisdom, and to give him praise of both in his ordinary works; so those things, which are but trivial to the most ignorant, shall be wonders to me, and that, not for nine days, but for ever.

XIX. Those that affect to tell novelties and wonders, fall into many absurdities, both in busy inquiry after

matters impertinent, and in a light credulity to whatever they hear, and in fictions of their own, and additions of circumstances to make their reports the more admired. I have noted these men, not so much wondered at for their strange stories while they are telling, as derided afterwards, when the event hath wrought their disproof and shame. I will deal with rumours, as grave men do with strange fashions, take them up, when they are grown into common use before. I may believe, but I will not relate them but under the name of my author; who shall either warrant me with defence, if it be true; or, if false, bear my shame.

XX. It was a witty and true speech of that obscure Heraclitus, that all men, awaking, are in one common world; but when we sleep, each man goes into a several world by himself; which though it be but a world of fancies, yet is the true image of that little world which is in every man's heart; for the imaginations of our sleep shew us what our disposition is awaking: and as many in their dreams reveal those their secrets to others, which they would never have done awake, so all may and do disclose to themselves in their sleep those secret inclinations, which, after much searching, they could not have found out waking. I doubt not therefore, but as God heretofore hath taught future things in dreams, which kind of revelation is now ceased, so still he teacheth the present estate of the heart this way. Some dreams are from ourselves, vain and idle, like ourselves; others are divine, which teach us good or move us to good; and others devilish, which solicit us to evil. Such answer commonly shall I give to any temptation in the day, as I do by night. I will not lightly pass over my very dreams; they shall teach me somewhat: so neither night nor day shall be spent unprofitably. The night shall teach me what I am; the day, what I should be.

XXI. Men make difference betwixt servants, friends, and sons. Servants, though near us in place, yet, for their inferiority, are not familiar. Friends, though, by reason of their equality and our love, they are familiar, yet still we conceive of them as others from ourselves. But children we think of affectionately, as the divided pieces of

our own bodies. But all these are one to God: his servants are his friends; his friends are his sons; his sons, his servants. Many claim kindred of God and profess friendship to him, because these are privileges without difficulty, and not without honour. All the trial is in service: the others are most in affection, and therefore secret, and so may be dissembled; this, consisting in action, must needs shew itself to the eyes of others. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Friendship with God is in service, and this service is in action. Many wear God's cloth, that know not their Master, that never did good cheer in his service; so that God hath many retainers that wear his livery for a countenance; never wait on him; whom he will never own for servants, either by favour, or wages. Few servants, and therefore few sons. It is great favour in God and great honour to me, that he will vouchsafe to make me the lowest drudge in his family; which place if I had not, and were a monarch of men, I were accursed. I desire no more but to serve; yet, Lord, thou givest me more, to be thy son. I hear David say, "Seemeth it a small matter to you, to be the son-in-law to a king?" What is it then, O what is it, to be the true adopted son of the King of glory! Let me not now say as David of Saul, but as Saul's grandchild to David, "What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?"

XXII. I am a stranger here below; my home is above; yet I can think too well of these foreign vanities, and cannot think enough of my home. Surely that is not so far above my head, as my thoughts; neither doth so far pass me in distance, as in comprehension: and yet I should not stand so much upon conceiving, if I could admire it enough; but my strait heart is filled with a little wonder, and hath no room for the greatest part of glory that remaineth. O God, what happiness hast thou prepared for thy chosen! What a purchase was this, worthy of the blood of such a Saviour! As yet I do but look towards it afar off; but it is easy to see by the outside how goodly it is within: although, as thy house on earth, so that above, hath more glory within, than can be bewrayed by the outward appearance. The outer part of thy tabernacle here

below, is but an earthly and base substance ; but within it is furnished with a living, spiritual, and heavenly guest : so the outer heavens, though they be as gold to all other material creatures, yet they are but dross to thee. Yet how are even the outmost walls of that house of thine beautified with glorious lights, whereof every one is a world for bigness, and as a heaven for goodliness ! O teach me by this to long after, and wonder at the inner part, before thou lettest me come in to behold it !

XXIII. Riches, or beauty, or whatever worldly good that hath been, doth but grieve us ; that which is, doth not satisfy us ; that which shall be, is uncertain. What folly is it to trust to any of them !

XXIV. Security makes worldings merry ; and therefore are they secure, because they are ignorant. That is only solid joy, which ariseth from a resolution, when the heart hath cast up a full account of all causes of disquietness, and findeth the causes of its joy more forcible ; thereupon settling itself in a stayed course of rejoicing ; for the other, so soon as sorrow makes itself to be seen, especially in an unexpected form, is swallowed up in despair ; whereas this can meet with no occurrence which it hath not prevented in thought. Security and ignorance may scatter some refuse morsels of joy, sauced with much bitterness ; or may be like some boasting housekeeper, who keepeth open doors for one day with much cheer, and lives starvingly all the year after. There is no good ordinary, but in a good conscience. I pity that unsound joy in others, and will seek for this sound joy in myself. I would rather weep upon a just cause, than rejoice unjustly.

XXV. As love keeps the whole law, so love only is the breaker of it, being the ground, as of all obedience, so of all sin ; for whereas sin hath been commonly accounted to have too roots, love and fear, it is plain that fear hath its original from love ; for no man fears to loose ought, but what he loves. Here is sin and righteousness brought both into a short sum, depending both upon one poor affection. It shall be my only care therefore, to bestow my love well, both for object and measure. All that is good I may love, but in several degrees ; what is simply good, absolutely ; what is good by circumstance, only

with limitation. There be these three things, that I may love without exception, God, my neighbour, my soul ; yet so as each have their due place : my body, goods, and fame, as servants to the former. All other things I will either not care for or hate.

XXVI. One would not think, that pride and base-mindedness should so well agree ; yea, that they love so together, that they never go asunder. That envy ever proceeds from a base mind, is granted of all. Now the proud man, as he fain would be envied of others, so he envieth all men. His betters he envies, because he is not so good as they ; he envies his inferiors, because he fears they should prove as good as he ; his equals, because they are as good as he. So, under big looks, he bears a base mind ; resembling some Cardinal's mule, which, to make up the train, bears a costly port-mantle stuffed with trash. On the contrary, who is more proud than the basest, (the cynic tramples on Plato's pride, but with a worse) especially if he be but a little exalted ? wherein we see base men so much more haughty, as they have had less before, that they might be proud of. It is just with God, as the proud man is base in himself, so to make him basely esteemed in the eyes of others ; and, at last, to make him base without pride. I will condemn a proud man, because he is base ; and pity him, because he is proud.

XXVII. Let me have but time to my thoughts, but leisure to think of heaven, and grace to my leisure ; and I can be happy in spite of the world. Nothing but God that gives it, can bereave me of grace ; and he will not ; for his gifts are without repentance. Nothing, but death, can abridge me of time ; and when I begin to want time to think of heaven, I shall have eternal leisure to enjoy it. I shall be both ways happy ; not from any apprehension of virtue in me, who have no peer in unworthiness, but from the glory of that I apprehend ; wherein the act and object are from the author of happiness. He gives me this glory ; let me give him the glory of his gift. His glory is my happiness ; let my glory be his.

XXVIII. God bestows favours upon some in anger, as he strikes other some in love ; (the Israelites had better have wanted their quails, than to have eaten them with

such sauce) and sometimes, at our instance removing a lesser punishment, leaves a greater, though insensible, in the room of it. I will not so much strive against affliction, as displeasure. Let me rather be afflicted in love, than prosper without it.

XXIX. It is strange that we men, having so continual use of God, and being so perpetually beholden to him, should be so strange to him, and so little acquainted with him; since we account it perverse nature in any man, that, being provoked with many kind offices, refuses the familiarity of a worthy friend, who doth still seek it and hath deserved it. Whence it comes, that we are so loth to think of our dissolution and going to God; for naturally, where we are not acquainted, we list not to hazard our welcome, chusing rather to spend our money at a simple inn, than to turn in for a free lodging to an unknown host, whom we have only heard of, never had friendship with; whereas to an entire friend, whose nature and welcome we know, and whom we have elsewhere familiarly conversed withal, we go as boldly and willingly as to our home, knowing that no hour can be unseasonable to such a one. While, on the other side, we scrape acquaintance with the world, that never did us good, even after many repulses. I will not live with God and in God, without his acquaintance; knowing it my happiness to have such a friend. I will not let one day pass, without some act of renewing my familiarity with him; not giving over, till I have given him some testimony of my love to him, and joy in him; and till he hath left behind him some pledge of his continued favour to me.

XXX. Men, for the most part, would neither die nor be old. When we see an aged man that hath over-lived all the teeth of his gums, the hair of his head, the sight of his eyes, the taste of his palate; we profess we would not live till such a cumbersome age, wherein we prove burdens to our dearest friends and ourselves: yet if it be put to our choice what year we would die, we ever shift it off till the next, and want not excuses for this prorogation; rather than fail, alledging we would live to amend; when yet we do but add more to the heap of our sins by continuance. Nature hath nothing to plead for this folly,

but that life is sweet: wherein we give occasion of renewing that ancient check, or one not unlike to it, whereby that primitive vision taxed the timorousness of the shrinking confessors; "Ye would neither live to be old, nor die ere your age: what should I do with you?" The Christian must not think it enough to endure the thought of death with patience, when it is obtruded upon him by necessity; but must voluntarily call it into his mind with joy; not only abiding it should come, but wishing that it might come. I will not leave, till I can resolve, if I might die to day, not to live till to-morrow.

XXXI. As a true friend is the sweetest contentment in the world, so in his qualities he well resembleth honey, the sweetest of all liquors. Nothing is more sweet to the taste, nothing more sharp and cleansing, when it meets with an exulcerate sore. For myself, I know I must have faults, and therefore I care not for that friend that I shall never smart by. For my friends, I know they cannot be faultless, and therefore, as they shall find me sweet in their praises and encouragements, so sharp also in their censure. Either let them abide me no friend to their faults, or no friend to themselves.

XXXII. In all other things we are led by profit; but in the main matter of all, we shew ourselves utterly unthrifty; and, while we are wise in making good markets in these base commodities, we shew ourselves foolish in the great match of our souls. God and the world come both to one shop, and make proffers for our souls. The world, like a frank chapman, says, "All these things will I give thee," shewing us his bags and promotions, and thrusting them into our hands; God offers a crown of glory, which yet he tells us we must give him day to perform, and have nothing in present, but our hope and some small earnest of the bargain. Though we know there is no comparison betwixt these two in value, finding these earthly things vain and unable to give any contentment, and those others of invaluable worth and benefit; yet we would rather take these in hand, than trust God on his word for the future, while yet, in the same kind, we choose rather to take some rich lordship in reversion, after the long expectation of three lives expired, than a present sum much under foot.

As contrarily, when God and the world are sellers and we come to the mart, the world offers fine painted wares, but will not part with them under the price of our torments; God proclaims, "Come, ye that want, buy for nought;" now, we thrifty men that try all shops for the cheapest pennyworth, refuse God, proffering his precious commodities for nothing; and pay a hard price for that which is worse than nothing, painful. Surely we are wise for any thing, but our souls: not so wise for the body, as foolish for them. O Lord thy payment is sure, and who knows how present? Take the soul that thou hast both made and bought; and let me rather give my life for thy favour, than take the offers of the world for nothing.

XXXIII. There was never age that more bragged of knowledge; and yet never any that had less soundness. He that knows not God, knoweth nothing; and he that loves not God, knows him not; for he is so sweet and infinitely full of delight, that whoever knows him cannot choose but affect him. The little love of God then argues the great ignorance, even of those that profess knowledge. I will not suffer my affections to run before my knowledge; for then I shall love fashionably only, because I hear God is worthy of love, and so be subject to relapses; but I will ever lay knowledge as the ground of my love; so that, as I grow in divine knowledge, I shall still profit in a heavenly zeal.

XXXIV. Those that travel in long pilgrimages to the Holy Land, what a number of weary paces they measure! what a number of hard lodgings and known dangers they pass! and, at last, when they are come within view of their journey's end, what a large tribute pay they at the Pisan castle to the Turks! And when they are come thither, what see they, but the bare sepulchre wherein their Saviour lay, and the earth that he trod upon, to the increase of a carnal devotion? What labour should I willingly undertake in my journey to the true land of promise, the celestial Jerusalem, where I shall see and enjoy my Saviour himself! What tribute of pain or death should I refuse to pay for my entrance, not into his sepulchre, but his palace of glory; and that, not to look upon; but to possess it!

Div.—XXXVIII.

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XXXV. Those that are all in exhortation, no whit in doctrine, are like to them that snuff the candle, but pour not in oil. Again, those that are all in doctrine, nothing in exhortation, drown the wick in oil, but light it not; making it fit for use, if it had fire put to it; but, as it is, rather capable of good, than profitable in present. - Doctrine, without exhortation, makes men all brain, no heart; exhortation, without doctrine, makes the heart full, leaves the brain empty. Both together make a man. One makes a man wise; the other, good: one serves that we may know our duty; the other, that we may perform it. I will labour in both; but I know not in whether more. Men cannot practise, unless they know; and they know in vain, if they practise not.

XXXVI. There be two things in every good work, honour and profit; the latter God bestows upon us, the former he keeps to himself. The profit of our works redoundeth not to God; "My well-doing extendeth not to thee." The honour of our work may not be allowed us! "My glory I will not give to another." I will not abridge God of his part, that he may not bereave me of mine.

XXXVII. The proud man hath no God; the envious man hath no neighbour; the angry man hath not himself. What can that man have, that wants himself? What is a man better, if he have himself, and want all others? What is he the nearer, if he have himself, and others, and yet want God? What good is it then to be a man, if he be either wrathful, proud, or envious?

XXXVIII. Man, that was once the sovereign lord of all creatures, whom they serviceably attended at all times, is now sent to the very basest of all creatures, to learn good qualities; "Go to the pismire;" and sees the most contemptible creatures preferred before him; "The ass knoweth his owner." Wherein we, like the miserable heir of some great peer whose house is decayed through the treason of his progenitors, hear and see what honours and lordships we should have had, but now find ourselves below many of the vulgar. We have not so much cause of exaltation, that we are men and not beasts, as we have of humiliation, in thinking how much we were once better than we are, and that now in many duties we are men

inferior to beasts : so that those whom we condemn, if they had our reason, might more justly condemn us ; and, as they are, may teach us by their examples, and do condemn us by their practice.

XXXIX. The idle man is the devil's cushion, on which he taketh his free ease ; who, as he is incapable of any good, so he is fitly disposed for all evil motions. The standing water soon stinketh ; whereas the current ever keeps clear and cleanly, conveying down all noisome matter that might infect it, by the force of its stream. If I do but little good to others by my endeavours, yet this is great good to me, that by my labour I keep myself from hurt.

XL. There can be no nearer conjunction in nature, than is betwixt the body and the soul ; yet these two are of so contrary disposition, that, as it falls out in an ill-matched man and wife, those servants which the one likes best, are most dispraised of the other ; so here, one still takes part against the other in their choice. What benefits the one, is the hurt of the other. The glutting of the body pines the soul ; and the soul thrives best, when the body is pinched. Who can wonder, that there is such faction amongst others, that sees so much in his very self ? True wisdom is, to take, not with the stronger, as the fashion of the world is, but with the better ; following herein, not usurped power, but justice. It is not hard to discern whose the right is, whether the servant should rule, or the mistress. I will labour to make and keep the peace, by giving each part his own indifferently ; but if more be affected with an ambitious contention, I will rather beat Hagar out of doors, than she shall over-rule her mistress.

XLI. I see iron first heated red-hot in the fire, and afterwards beaten and hardened with cold water. Thus will I deal with an offending friend ; first heat him with deserved praise of his virtue, and then beat upon him with apprehension. So good nurses, when their children are fallen, first take them up and speak them fair, chide them afterwards. Gentle speech is a good preparative for rigour. He shall see that I love him, by my approbation ;

and that I love not his faults, by my reproof. If he love himself, he will love those that mislike his vices ; and if he love not himself, it matters not whether he love me.

XLII. The liker we are to God, who is the best and only good, the better and happier we must needs be. All sins make us unlike him, as being contrary to his perfect holiness ; but some shew more direct contrariety : such is envy ; for whereas God bringeth good out of evil, the envious man fetcheth evil out of good. Wherein also his sin proves a kind of punishment ; for whereas to good men even evil things work together to their good, contrarily, to the envious good things work together to their evil. The evil in any man, though never so prosperous, I will not envy, but pity ; the good graces I will not repine at, but holily emulate ; rejoicing that they are so good, but grieving that I am no better.

XLIII. The covetous man is like a spider, as in this, that he doth nothing but lay his nets to catch every fly, gaping only for a booty of gain ; so yet more in that while he makes nets for these flies, he consumeth his own bowels, so that which is his life, is his death. If there be any creature miserable, it is he ; and yet he is least to be pitied, because he makes himself miserable. Such as he is, I will account him ; and will therefore sweep down his webs, and hate his poison.

XLIV. In heaven, there is all life and no dying ; in hell, is all death and no life ; in earth, there is both living and dying ; which, as it is betwixt both, so it prepares for both : So that he who here below dies to sin, doth after live in heaven ; and, contrarily, he, that lives in sin upon earth, dies in hell afterward. What if I have no part of joy here below, but still succession of afflictions ? The wicked have no part in heaven, and yet they enjoy the earth with pleasure. I would not change portions with them. I rejoyce that, seeing I cannot have both, yet I have the better. O Lord, let me pass both my deaths here upon earth. I care not how I live or die, so I may have nothing but life to look for in another world.

XLV. The conceit of propriety hardens a man against many inconveniences, and addeth much to our pleasure. The mother abides many unquiet nights, many painful

throws, and unpleasant savours of her child, upon this thought, "It is my own." The indulgent father magnifies that in his own son, which he would scarce like in a stranger. The want of this to God-ward makes us so subject to discontentment, and cooleth our delight in him; because we think of him aloof, as one in whom we are not interested. If we could think, "It is my God that cheereth me with his presence and blessings, while I prosper; that afflicteth me in love when I am dejected; my Saviour is at God's right-hand; my angels stand in his presence;" it could not be, but God's favour would be sweeter, his chastisements more easy, his benefits more effectual. I am not mine own, while God is not mine; and while he is mine, since I do possess him, I will enjoy him.

XLVI. Nature is, of her own inclination, froward, importunately longing after that which is denied her, and scornful of what she may have. If it were appointed, that we should live always upon earth, how extremely should we exclaim of weariness, and wish rather that we were not! Now it is appointed we shall live here but awhile, and then give room to our successors, each one affects a kind of eternity upon earth. I will labour to tame this peevish and sullen humour of nature, and will like that best, that must be.

XLVII. All true earthly pleasure forsook man, when he forsook his Creator. What honest and holy delight he took before in the dutiful services of the obsequious creatures; in the contemplation of that admirable variety and strangeness of their properties; in seeing their sweet accordance with each other, and all with himself! Now most of our pleasure is, to set one creature together by the ears with another, sporting ourselves only with that deformity, which was bred through our own fault. Yea, there have been, that have delighted to see one man spill another's blood upon the sand; and have shouted for joy at the sight of that slaughter, which hath fallen out upon no other quarrel, but the pleasure of the beholders. I doubt not, as we solace ourselves in the discord of the inferior creatures, so the evil spirits sport themselves in our dissensions. There are better qualities of the creature, which we pass over without pleasure. In recreations, I

will choose those, which are of best example and best use; seeking those, by which I may not only be the merrier, but the better.

XLVIII. There is no want for which a man may not find a remedy in himself. Do I want riches, he that desires but little, cannot want much. Do I want friends? if I love God enough, and myself but enough, it matters not. Do I want health? if I want it but a little and recover, I shall esteem it the more, because I wanted; if I be long sick and unrecoverably, I shall be the fitter and willinger to die, and my pain is so much less sharp, by how much more it lingereth. Do I want maintenance? a little and course will content nature; let my mind be no more ambitious, than my back and belly, I can hardly complain of too little. Do I want sleep? I am going whither there is no use of sleep, where all rest and sleep not. Do I want children? many that have them, wish they wanted: it is better to be childless, than crossed with their miscarriage. Do I want learning? he hath none, that saith he hath enough: the next way to get more is, to find thou wantest. There is remedy for all wants in ourselves, saving only for want of grace; and that, a man cannot so much as see and complain that the wants, but from above.

XLIX. Every virtuous action, like the sun eclipsed, hath a double shadow, according to the divers aspects of the beholders; one, of glory; the other, of envy: glory follows upon good deserts; envy, upon glory. He that is envied, may think himself well; for he that envies him, thinks him more than well. I know no vice in another, whereof a man may make so good and comfortable use to himself. There would be no shadow, if there were no light.

L. In meddling with the faults of friends, I have observed many wrongful courses, what for fear, or self-love, or indiscretion. Some I have seen, like unmerciful and covetous chirurgeons, keep the wound raw, which they might have seasonably remedied, for their own gain; others, that have laid healing plaisters to skin it aloft, when there hath been more need of corrosives to eat out the dead flesh within; others that have galled and drawn, when there hath been nothing but solid flesh that hath

wanted only filling up ; others that have healed the sore, but left an unsightly scar of discredit behind them. He that would do good this way, must have fidelity, courage, discretion, patience ; fidelity, not to bear with faults ; courage, to reprove them ; discretion, to reprove them well ; patience, to abide the leisure of amendment, making much of good beginnings, and putting up many repulses ; bearing with many weaknesses ; still hoping, still soliciting ; as knowing, that those who have been long used to fetters, cannot but halt a while, when they are taken off.

LI. God hath made all the world, and yet what a little part of it is his ! Divide the world into four parts : but one, and the least, containeth all that is worthy the name of Christendom ; the rest overwhelmed with Turkism and Paganism : and of this least part, the greater half, yet holding aright concerning God and their Saviour in some common principles, overthrow the truth in their conclusions ; and so leave the lesser part of the least part for God. Yet lower : of those that hold aright concerning Christ, how few are there that do otherwise than fashionably profess him ! And of those that do seriously profess him, how few are there that in their lives deny him not, living unworthy of so glorious a calling ! Wherein I do not pity God, who will have glory even of those that are not his ; I pity miserable men, that do reject their Creator and Redeemer, and themselves in him ; and I envy Satan, that he ruleth so large. Since God hath so few, I will be more thankful that he hath vouchsafed me one of his ; and be the more zealous of glorifying him, because we have but a few fellows.

LII. As those that have tasted of some delicate dish, find other plain dishes but unpleasant ; so it fareth with those who have once tasted of heavenly things ; they cannot but condemn the best worldly pleasures. As therefore some dainty guest, knowing there is so pleasant fare to come, I will reserve my appetite for it, and not suffer myself to be cloyed with the coarse diet of the world.

LIII. I find many places, where God hath used the hand of good angels for the punishment of the wicked ; but never could yet find one, wherein he employed an evil angel in any direct good to his children : indirect I

find many, if not all ; through the power of him that brings light out of darkness, and turns their evil to our good. In this choice, God would and must be imitated. From an evil spirit I dare not receive ought, if ever so good : I will receive as little as I may, from a wicked man ; if he were as perfectly evil as the other, I durst receive nothing. I would rather hunger, than wilfully dip my hand in a wicked man's dish.

LIV. We are ready to condemn others, for that which is as eminently faulty in ourselves. If one blind man rush upon another in the way, either complains of other's blindness ; neither of his own. I have heard those who have had most corrupt lungs, complain of the unsavoury breath of others. The reason is, because the mind casteth altogether outward, and reflecteth not into itself. Yet it is more shameful to be either ignorant of, or favourable to, our own imperfections. I will censure others' vices fearfully ; my own confidently, because I know them ; and those I know not, I will suspect.

LV. He is a very humble man, that thinks not himself better than some others ; and he is very mean, whom some others do not account better than themselves : so that vessel which seemed very small upon the main, seems a tall ship upon the Thames. As there are many better for estate than myself, so there are some worse ; and if I were yet worse, yet would there be some lower ; and if I were so low that I accounted myself the worst of all, yet some would account themselves in worse case. A man's opinion is in others ; his being is in himself. Let me know myself ; let others guess at me. Let others either envy or pity me, I care not, so long as I enjoy myself.

LVI. He can never wonder enough at God's workmanship, that knows not the frame of the world ; for he can never else conceive of the hugeness and strange proportion of the creature. And he that knows this, can never wonder more at any thing else. I will learn to know, that I may admire ; and by that little I know, I will more wonder at that I know not.

LVII. There is nothing below, but toiling, grieving, wishing, hoping and fearing ; and weariness in all these. What fools are we to be besotted with the love of our own

trouble, and to hate our liberty and rest! The love of misery is much worse, than misery itself. We must first pray, that God would make us wise, before we can wish, he would make us happy.

LVIII. If a man refer all things to himself, nothing seems enough; if all things to God, any measure will content him of earthly things, but in grace he is insatiable. Worldlings serve themselves altogether in God, making religion but to serve their turns, as a colour of their ambition and covetousness. The Christian seeks God only in seeking himself, using all other things but as subordinately to him, not caring whether himself win or lose, so that God may win glory in both. I will not suffer mine eyes and mind to be bounded with these visible things, but still look through these matters at God, who is the utmost scope of them; accounting them only as a thoroughfare to pass by, not as a habitation to rest in.

LIX. He is wealthy enough, that wanteth not; he is great enough, that is his own master; he is happy enough, that lives to die well. Other things I will not care for, nor too much for these; save only for the last, which alone can admit of no immoderation.

LX. A man of extraordinary parts makes himself, by strange and singular behaviour, more admired; which if a man of but common faculty do imitate, he makes himself ridiculous; for that which is construed as natural to the one, is descried to be affected in the other; and there is nothing forced by affectation can be comely. I will ever strive to go in the common road; so, while I am not notable, I shall not be notorious.

LXI. Gold is the best metal; and, for the purity, not subject to rust, as all others; and yet the best gold hath some dross. I esteem not that man that hath no faults: I like him well, that hath but a few, and those, not great.

LXII. Many a man mars a good estate for want of skill to proportion his carriage answerably to his ability. A little sail to a large vessel rides no way, though the wind be fair; a large sail to a little bark drowns it; a top-sail to a ship of mean burden, in a rough weather, is dangerous; a low-sail, in an easy gale, yields little advantage. This disproportion causeth some to live miserably in a good

estate, and some to make a good estate miserable. I will first know what I may do for safety, and then I will try what I can do for speed.

LXIII. The rich man hath many friends; although, in truth, riches have them, and not the man; as the ass, that carried the Egyptian goddess, had many bowed knees, yet not to the beast, but to the burden; for separate the riches from the person, and thou shalt see friendship leave the man, and follow that which was ever her object. While he may command, and can either give or controul, he hath attendance and proffer of love at all hands; but which of these dares acknowledge him, when he is going to prison for debt? Then these wasps, that made such music about this gallipot, shew plainly that they came only for the honey that was in it. This is the misery of the wealthy, that they cannot know their friends; whereas those that love the poor man, love him for himself. He that would choose a friend, must search out one that is neither covetous nor ambitious; for such a one loves but himself in thee. And if it be rare to find any not infected with these qualities, the best is, to entertain all and trust few.

LXIV. That which the French proverb hath of sicknesses, is true of all evils, that they come on horseback and go away on foot. We have oft seen a sudden fall, or one meal's surfeit hath stuck by many to their graves; whereas pleasures come like oxen, slow and heavily; and go away like post-horses, upon the spur. Sorrows, because they are lingering guests, I will entertain but moderately, knowing that the more they are made of, the longer they will continue; and for pleasures, because they stay not and do but call at my door, I will use them as passengers, with slight respect. He is his own best friend, that makes least of both of them.

LXV. It is indeed more commendable to give good example, than to take it; yet imitation, however in civil matters it be condemned of servility, in Christian practice hath its due praise; and though it be more natural for beginners at their first initiation, that cannot swim without bladders, yet the best proficient shall see ever some higher steps of those that have gone to heaven before him, worthy of his tracing. Wherein much caution must be

had, that we follow good men, and in good—good men, for if we propound imperfect patterns to ourselves, we shall be constrained first to unlearn those ill habits we have got by their imitation, before we can be capable of good; so, besides the loss of labour, we are further off from our end—in good, for that a man should be so wedded to any man's person, that he can make no separation from his infirmities, is both absurdly servile and unchristian. He therefore that would follow well, must know to distinguish well betwixt good men and evil, betwixt good men and better, betwixt good qualities and infirmities. Why hath God given me education, not in a desert alone, but in the company of good and virtuous men, but that, by the sight of their good carriage, I should better mine own? Why should we have interest in the vices of men, and not in their virtues? And although precepts be surer, yet a good man's action is according to precept, yea, is a precept itself. The psalmist compares the law of God to a lanthorn: good example bears it. It is safe following him that carries the light. If he walk without the light, he shall walk without me.

LXVI. As there is one common end to all good men, salvation; and one author of it, Christ; so there is but one way to it, doing well and suffering evil. Doing well, methinks, is like the zodiac in the heaven, the high-way of the sun, through which it daily passeth; suffering evil is like the ecliptic-line, that goes through the midst of it. The rule of doing well, the law of God, is uniform and eternal; and the copies of suffering evil in all times agree with the original. No man can either do well or suffer ill without an example. Are we sawn in pieces? so was Isaiah. Are we beheaded? so John the Baptist. Crucified? so Peter. Thrown to wild beasts? so Daniel. Into the furnace? so the three children. Stoned? so Stephen. Banished? so the beloved disciple. Burnt? so millions of martyrs. Defamed and slandered? what good man ever was not? It were easy to be endless both in torments and sufferers; whereof each hath begun to other, all to us. I may not hope to speed better than the best Christians; I cannot fear to fare worse. It is no matter which way I go, so I come to heaven.

LXVII. There is nothing, besides life, of this nature, that it is diminished by addition. Every moment we live longer than other; and each moment that we live longer, is so much taken out of our life. It increaseth and diminisheth only by minutes, and therefore is not perceived: the shorter steps it taketh, the more slyly it passeth. Time shall not so steal upon me, that I shall not discern it and catch it by the fore-locks; nor so steal from me, that it shall carry with it no witness of his passage in my proficiency.

LXVIII. The prodigal man, while he spendeth, is magnified; when he is spent, is pitied; and that is all his recompence for his lavished patrimony. The covetous man is grudged while he lives, and his death is rejoiced at; for when he ends, his riches begin to be goods. He that wisely keeps the mean between both, lives well and hears well; neither repined at by the needy, nor pitied by greater men. I would so manage these worldly commodities, as accounting them mine, to dispose; others', to partake of.

LXIX. A good name (if any earthly thing) is worth seeking, worth striving for; yet to affect a bare name, when we deserve either ill or nothing, is but a proud hypocrisy; and to be puffed up with the wrongful estimation of others' mistaking our worth, is an idle and ridiculous pride. Thou art well spoken of upon no desert: what then? thou hast deceived thy neighbours; they, one another; and all of them have deceived thee; for thou madest them think of thee otherwise than thou art, and they have made thee think of thyself as thou art accounted. The deceit came from thee; the shame will end in thee. I will account no wrong greater, than for a man to esteem and report me above that I am; not rejoicing in that I am well thought of, but in that I am such as I am esteemed.

LXX. It was a speech worthy the commendation and frequent remembrance of so divine a bishop as Augustin, which is reported of an aged father in his time; who, when his friends comforted him on his sick-bed, and told him they hoped he should recover, answered, "If I shall not die at all, well; but if ever, why not now?" Surely

it is folly, what we must do, to do unwillingly. I will never think my soul in a good case, so long as I am loth to think of dying; and will make this my comfort, not, I shall yet live longer, but, I shall yet do more good.

LXXI. Excesses are never alone. Commonly those that have excellent parts, have some extremely vicious qualities. Great wits have great errors, and great estates have great cares; whereas mediocrity of gifts or of estate hath usually but easy inconveniences: else the excellent would not know themselves, and the mean would be too much dejected. Now, those whom we admire for their faculties, we pity for their infirmities; and those who find themselves but of the ordinary pitch, joy that, as their virtues, so their vices are not eminent. So the highest have a blemished glory, and the mean are contentedly secure. I will magnify the highest, but affect the mean.

LXXII. The body is the case or sheath of the mind: yet, as naturally it hideth it, so it doth also many times discover it; for although the forehead, eyes, and frame of the countenance do sometime belie the disposition of the heart, yet most commonly they give true general verdicts. An angry man's brows are bent together, and his eyes sparkle with rage; which, when he is well pleased, look smooth and cheerfully. Envy hath one look; desire, another; sorrow, yet another; contentment, a fourth, different from all the rest. To shew no passion is too stoical, to shew all is impotent, to shew other than we feel, hypocritical. The face and gesture do but write and make commentaries upon the heart. I will first endeavour so to frame and order that, as not to entertain any passion, but what I need not care to have laid open to the world; and therefore will first see that the text be good; then that the gloss be true; and, lastly, that it be sparing. To what end hath God so walled in the heart, if I should let every man's eyes into it by my countenance?

LXXIII. There is no public action, which the world is not ready to scan; there is no action so private, which the evil spirits are not witnesses of. I will endeavour so to live, as knowing that I am ever in the eyes of mine enemies.

LXXIV. When we ourselves and all other vices are old,

then covetousness alone is young and at his best age. This vice loves to dwell in an old, ruinous cottage: yet that age can have no such honest colour for niggardliness and insatiable desire. A young man might plead the uncertainty of his estate, and doubt of his future need; but an old man sees his set period before him. Since this humour is so necessarily annexed to this age, I will turn it the right way, and nourish it in myself. The older I grow, the more covetous I will be, but of the riches, not of the world I am leaving, but of the world I am entering into. It is good coveting what I may have, and cannot leave behind me.

LXXV. There is a mutual hatred betwixt a Christian and the world; for, on the one side, the love of the world is enmity with God, and God's children cannot but take their Father's part; on the other, "The world hates you, because it hated me first." But the hatred of the good man to the wicked is not so extreme, as that wherewith he is hated; for the Christian hates ever with commiseration, and love of that good he sees in the worst; knowing that the essence of the very devils is good, and that the lewdest man hath some excellent parts of nature, or common graces of the Spirit of God, which he warily singleth out in his affection: but the wicked man hates him for goodness; and therefore finds nothing in himself to moderate his detestation. There can be no better music in mine ear, than the discord of the wicked. If he like me, I am afraid he spies some quality in me like to his own. If he saw nothing but goodness, he could not love me, and be bad himself. It was a just doubt of Phocion, who, when the people praised him, asked, "What evil have I done?" I will strive to deserve evil of none; but, not deserving ill, it shall not grieve me to hear ill of those that are evil. I know no greater argument of goodness, than the hatred of a wicked man.

LXXVI. A man that comes hungry to his meal, feeds heartily on the meat set before him, not regarding the metal or form of the platter wherein it is served; who afterwards, when his stomach is satisfied, begins to play with the dish, or to read sentences on his trencher. Those auditors who can find nothing to do, but note elegant

words and phrases, or rhetorical colours, or perhaps an ill grace of gesture in a pithy and material speech, argue themselves full ere they came to the feast; and therefore go away with a little pleasure, no profit. In hearing others, my only intention shall be to feed my mind with solid matters. If my ear can get aught by the way, I will not grudge it, but I will not intend it.

LXXVII. The joy of a Christian in these worldly things is limited, and ever awed with fear of excess, but recompensed abundantly with his spiritual mirth; whereas the worldling gives the reins to the mind, and pours himself into pleasure, fearing only that he shall not joy enough. He that is but half a Christian, lives but miserably, for he neither enjoyeth God nor the world—not God, because he hath not grace enough to make him his own—not the world, because he hath some taste of grace, enough to shew him the vanity and sin of his pleasures. So the sound Christian hath his heaven above; the worldling, here below; the unsettled Christian no where.

LXXVIII. Good deeds are very fruitful, and, not so much of their nature as of God's blessing, multipliable. We think ten in the hundred extreme and biting usury; God gives us more than a hundred for ten, yea, above the increase of the grain, which we commend most for multiplication; for out of one good action of ours, God produceth a thousand, the harvest whereof is perpetual. Even the faithful actions of the old patriarchs, the constant sufferings of ancient martyrs, live still, and do good to all successions of ages by their example; for public actions of virtue, besides that they are presently comfortable to the doers, are also exemplary to others; and, as they are more beneficial to others, so are more crowned in us. If good deeds were utterly barren and incommodious, I would seek after them for the conscience of their own goodness; how much more shall I now be encouraged to perform them, for that they are so profitable both to myself and to others, and to me in others! My principal care shall be, that while my soul lives in glory in heaven, my good actions may live upon earth; and that they may be put into the bank and multiply, while my body lies in the grave and consumeth.

LXXIX. A Christian, for the sweet fruit he bears to God and men, is compared to the noblest of all plants, the vine. Now as the most generous vine, if not pruned, runs out into many superfluous stems and grows at last weak and fruitless, so doth the best man, if he be not cut short of his desires and pruned with afflictions. If it be painful to bleed, it is worse to wither. Let me be pruned, that I may grow; rather than cut up, to burn.

LXXX. Those that do but superficially taste of divine knowledge, find but little sweetness in it, and are ready, for the unpleasant relish, to abhor it; whereas if they would dive deep into the sea, they would find fresh water near to the bottom. That it savours not well at the first is the fault, not of it, but of the distempered palate that tastes it. Good metals and minerals are not found close under the skin of the earth, but below in the bowels of it. No good miner casts away his mattock, because he finds a vein of tough clay or a shelf of stone; but still delveth lower, and passing through many changes of soil, at last comes to his rich treasure. We are too soon discouraged in our spiritual gains. I will still persevere to seek, hardening myself against all difficulty. There is comfort even in seeking, hope; and there is joy in hoping, good success; and in that success is happiness.

LXXXI. He that hath any experience in spiritual matters, knows that Satan is ever more violent at the last; then raging most furiously, when he knows he shall rage but a while. Hence of the first persecutions of the first church, the tenth and last, under Dioclesian and Maximinian and those other five tyrants, was the bloodiest. Hence this age is the most dissolute, because nearest the conclusion. And, as this is his course in the universal assaults of the whole church, so it is the same in his conflicts with every Christian soul. Like a subtle orator, he reserves his strongest force till the shutting up; and therefore miserable is the folly of those men, who defer their repentance till then, when their onset shall be most sharp, and they, through pain of body and perplexedness of mind, shall be least able to resist. Those that have long furnished themselves with spiritual munition, find work enough in this extreme brunt of temptation; how then should the careless

man, that, with the help of all opportunities, could not find grace to repent, hope to atchieve it at the last grasp, against greater force, with less means, more distraction, no leisure? Wise princes use to prepare ten years before for a field of one day : I will every day lay up somewhat for my last. If I win that skirmish, I have enough. The first and second blow begin the battle, but the last only wins it.

LXXXII. I observe three seasons wherein a wise man differs not from a fool, in his infancy, in sleep, and in silence ; for in the two former, we are all fools ; and in silence, all are wise. In the two former yet there may be concealment of folly, but the tongue is a blab : there cannot be any kind of folly, either simple or wicked, in the heart, but the tongue will bewray it. He cannot be wise, that speaks much, or without sense, or out of season ; nor he known for a fool, that says nothing. It is a great misery to be a fool ; but this is yet greater, that a man cannot be a fool but he must shew it. It were well for such a one, if he could be taught to keep close his foolishness : but then there would be no fools. I have heard some, who have scorned the opinion of folly in themselves, for a speech wherein they have hoped to shew most wit, censured of folly by him that hath thought himself wiser ; and another, hearing his sentence again, hath condemned him for want of wit in censuring. Surely he is not a fool, that hath unwise thoughts, but he that utters them. Even concealed folly is wisdom, and sometimes wisdom uttered is folly. While others care how to speak, my care shall be how to hold my peace.

LXXXIII. A work is then only good and acceptable, when the action, meaning, and manner are all good ; for to do good with an ill meaning, as Judas saluted Christ to betray him, is so much more sinful, by how much the action is better ; which, being good in the kind, is abused to an ill purpose. To do ill in a good meaning, as Uzziah, in staying the ark, is so much amiss, that the good intention cannot bear out the unlawful act ; which, although it may seem some excuse why it should not be so ill, yet is no warrant to justify it. To mean well, and do a good action in an ill manner, as the pharisee made a good prayer but arrogantly, is so offensive, that the evil manner depraveth

both the other. So a thing may be evil upon one circumstance; it cannot be good, but upon all. In whatever business I go about, I will enquire, "What I do," for the substance; "How," for the manner; "Why," for the intention. For the two first, I will consult with God; for the last, with my own heart.

LXXXIV. I can do nothing without a million of witnesses; the conscience is as a thousand witnesses, and God is as a thousand consciences. I will therefore so deal with men, as knowing that God sees me; and so with God, as if the world saw me; so with myself and both of them, as knowing that my conscience seeth me: and so with them all, as knowing I am always overlooked by my accuser, by my Judge.

LXXXV. Earthly inheritances are divided oftentimes with much inequality. The privilege of primogeniture stretcheth larger in many places now than it did among the ancient Jews. The younger many times serves the elder; and while the eldest aboundeth, all the latter issue is pinched. In heaven it is not so: all the sons of God are heirs; none underlings: and not heirs under wardship and hope, but inheritors; and not inheritors of any little pittance of land, but of a kingdom; nor of an earthly kingdom, subject to danger of loss or alteration, but one glorious and everlasting. It shall content me here, that, having right to all things, yet I have possession of nothing but sorrow. Since I shall have possession above, of all that whereto I have right below, I will serve willingly, that I may reign; serve for a while, that I may reign for ever.

LXXXVI. Even the best things, ill used, become evils; and, contrarily, the worst things, used well, prove good. A good tongue, used to deceit; a good wit, used to defend error; a strong arm, to murder; authority, to oppress; a good profession, to dissemble; are all evil: yea, God's own word is "the sword of the Spirit," which, if it kill not our vices, kills our souls. Contrariwise, as poisons are used to wholesome medicine, afflictions and sins, by a good use prove so gainful, as nothing more. Words are, as they are taken; and things are, as they are used. There are even cursed blessings. O Lord, rather give me no favours, than not grace to use them. If I want them, thou re-

quirest not what thou dost not give ; but, if I have them and want their use, thy mercy proves my judgment.

LXXXVII. Man is the best of all these inferior creatures, yet lives in more sorrow and discontentment, than the worst of them ; while that reason wherein he excels them and by which he might make advantage of his life, he abuses to a suspicious distrust. How many hast thou found of the fowls of the air lying dead in the way for want of provision ? They eat, and rest, and sing, and want nothing. Man, who hath far better means to live comfortably, toileth, and careth, and wanteth ; whom yet his reason alone might teach, that he who careth for these lower creatures made only for man, will much more provide for man, to whose use they were made. There is a holy carelessness, free from idleness, free from distrust. In these earthly things, I will so depend on my Maker, that my trust in him may not exclude all my labour ; and yet so labour, upon my confidence on him, as my endeavour may be void of perplexity.

LXXXVIII. The precepts and practice of those with whom we live, avail much on either part. For a man not to be ill where he hath no provocations to evil, is less commendable ; but for a man to live continently in Asia, where he sees nothing but allurements to uncleanness ; for Lot to be a good man in the midst of Sodom ; to be abstemious in Germany ; and in Italy, chaste ; this is truly praiseworthy. To sequester ourselves from the company of the world, that we may depart from their vices, proceeds from a base and distrusting mind ; as if we would so force goodness upon ourselves, that therefore only we would be good, because we cannot be ill ; but for a man so to be personally and locally in the throng of the world, as to withdraw his affections from it ; to use it, and yet to condemn it, at once ; to compel it to his service, without any infection ; becomes well the noble courage of a Christian. The world shall be mine, I will not be his ; and yet so mine, that his evil shall be still his own.

LXXXIX. He that lives in God, cannot be weary of his life, because he ever finds both somewhat to do, and somewhat to solace himself with ; cannot be over-loth to part with it, because he shall enter into a nearer life with that

God in whom he delighteth. Whereas he that lives without him, lives many times uncomfortably here, because partly he knows not any cause of joy in himself, and partly he finds not any worthy employment to while himself withal : dies miserably, because he either knows not whither he goes or knows he goes to torment. There is no true life, but the life of faith. O Lord, let me live out of the world with thee, if thou wilt ; but let me not live in the world without thee.

XC. Sin is both evil in itself, and the effect of a former evil, and the cause of sin following ; a cause of punishment ; and, lastly, a punishment itself. It is a damnable iniquity in man to multiply one sin upon another ; but to punish one sin by another, in God is a judgment both most just and most fearful ; so that all the store-house of God hath not a greater vengeance. With other punishments, the body smarteth ; the soul, with this. I care not how God offends me with punishments, so he punish me not with offending him.

XCI. I have seen some afflict their bodies with wilful famine, and scourges of their own making. God spares me that labour ; for he whips me daily with the scourge of a weak body, and sometimes with ill tongues. He holds me short, many times, of the feeling of his comfortable presence, which is, in truth, so much more miserable a hunger than that of the body, by how much the soul is more tender, and food denied more excellent. He is my Father ; infinitely wise, to proportion out my correction according to my estate ; and infinitely loving, in fitting me with a due measure. He is a presumptuous child, that will make choice of his own rod. Let me learn to make a right use of his corrections, and I shall not need to correct myself. And if it should please God to remit his hand a little, I will govern my body as a master, not as a tyrant.

XCII. If God had not said, " Blessed are those that hunger," I know not what could keep weak Christians from sinking into despair. Many times, all I can do is, to find and complain that I want him, and wish to recover him. Now this is my stay, that he in mercy esteems us, not only by having, but by desiring also ; and, after a sort, accounts us to have that which we want and desire to have : and

my soul assuming tells me I do unfeignedly wish him, and long after that grace I miss. Let me desire still more, and I know I shall not desire always. There was never soul miscarried with longing after grace. O blessed hunger, that ends always in fulness! I am sorry, that I can but hunger; and yet I would not be full, for the blessing is promised to the hungry. Give me more, Lord, but so as I may hunger more. Let me hunger more, and I know I shall be satisfied.

XCIII. There is more in the Christian, than thou seest; for he is both an entire body of himself and he is a limb of another more excellent, even that glorious mystical body of his Saviour, to whom he is so united, that the actions of either are reciprocally referred to each other. For, on the one side, the Christian lives in Christ, dies in Christ, in Christ fulfils the law, possesseth heaven; on the other, Christ is persecuted by Paul in his members, and is persecuted in Paul afterwards by others; he suffers in us, he lives in us, he works in and by us. So thou canst not do either good or harm to a Christian, but thou dost it to his Redeemer to whom he is invisibly united. Thou seest him as a man, and therefore worthy of favour for humanity's sake; thou seest him not as a Christian, worthy of honour for his secret and yet true union with our Saviour. I will love every Christian for that I see, honour him for that I shall see.

XCIV. Hell itself is scarcely a more obscure dungeon, in comparison of the earth, than earth is in respect of heaven. Here the most see nothing, and the best see little. Here half our life is night, and our very day is darkness in respect of God. The true Light of the world, and the Father of lights, dwelleth above. There is the light of knowledge to inform us, and the light of joy to comfort us, without all change of darkness. There was never any captive loved his dungeon, and complained, when he must be brought out to light and liberty. Whence then is this natural madness in us men, that we delight so much in this unclean, noisome, dark, and comfortless prison of earth; and think not of our release to that lightsome and glorious paradise above us, without grief and repining? We are sure, that we are not perfectly well here: if we

could be as sure, that we should be better above, we would not fear changing. Certainly our sense tells us we have some pleasure here, and we have not faith to assure us of more pleasure above: and hence we settle ourselves to the present with neglect of the future, though infinitely more excellent. The heart follows the eyes, and unknown good is uncared for. O Lord, do thou break through this darkness of ignorance and faithlessness, wherewith I am compassed. Let me but see my heaven, and I know I shall desire it.

XCV. To be carried away with an affectation of fame, is so vain and absurd, that I wonder it can be incident to any wise man; for what a mole-hill of earth is it, to which his name can extend, when it is furthest carried by the wings of report! And how short a while doth it continue, where it is once spread! Time, the devourer of his own brood, consumes both us and our memories: not brass, nor marble can bear age. How many flattering poets have promised immortality of name to their princes, who now together are buried long since in forgetfulness! Those names and actions that are once on the file of heaven, are past the danger of defacing. I will not care whether I be known, or remembered, or forgotten amongst men, if my name and good actions may live with God in the records of eternity.

XCVI. There is no man, nor no place, free from spirits, although they testify their presence by visible effects but in few. Every man is a host to entertain angels, though not in visible shapes, as Abraham and Lot. The evil ones do nothing, but provoke us to sin and plot mischiefs against us, by casting into our way dangerous objects; by suggesting sinful motions to our minds; by stirring up enemies against us amongst men; by frightening us with terrors in ourselves; by accusing us to God: on the contrary, the good angels are ever removing our hindrances from good and our occasions of evil; mitigating our temptations; helping us against our enemies; delivering us from dangers; comforting us in sorrows; furthering our good purposes; and, at last, carrying up our souls to heaven. It would affright a weak Christian that knows the power and malice of wicked spirits, to consider their

presence and number; but when, with the eyes of Elisha's servant, he sees those on his side at present, as diligent, more powerful, he cannot but take heart again; especially if he consider, that neither of them is without God; limiting the one, the bounds of their temptation; directing the other, in the safeguard of his children. Whereupon it is come to pass, that though there be many legions of devils, and every one more strong than many legions of men, and more malicious than strong, yet the little flock of God's church liveth and prospereth. I have ever with me invisible friends and enemies. The consideration of mine enemies shall keep me from security, and make me fearful of doing aught to advantage them. The consideration of my spiritual friends shall comfort me against the terror of the other; shall remedy my solitariness; shall make me wary of doing aught indecently; grieving me rather, that I have ever heretofore made them turn away their eyes for shame of that whereof I have not been ashamed; that I have no more enjoyed their society; that I have been no more affected with their presence. What though I see them not? I believe them. I were no Christian, if my faith were not as sure as my sense.

XCVII. There is no word or action, but may be taken with two hands, either with the right-hand of charitable construction, or the sinister interpretation of malice and suspicion: and all things do so succeed, as they are taken. I have noted evil actions, well taken, pass current for either indifferent or commendable; contrarily, a good speech or action, ill taken, scarcely allowed for indifferent; an indifferent one, censured for evil; an evil one, for notorious; so favour makes virtues of vices, and suspicion makes virtues faults, and faults crimes. Of the two, I would rather my right-hand should offend. It is always safer offending on the better part. To construe an evil act well is but a pleasing and profitable deceit of myself; but to misconstrue a good thing is a treble wrong, to myself, the action, the author. If no good sense can be made of a deed or speech, let the blame light upon the author; if a good interpretation may be given and I choose a worse, let me be as much censured of others, as that misconceit is punishment to myself.

HOLY OBSERVATIONS.

I. **As** there is nothing sooner dry, than a tear; so there is nothing sooner out of season, than worldly sorrow; which, if it be fresh and still bleeding, finds some to comfort and pity it; if stale and skinned over with time, is rather entertained with smiles than commiseration. But the sorrow of repentance comes never out of time. All times are alike unto that eternity, whereto we make our spiritual moans: that which is past, that which is future, are both present with him. It is neither weak nor uncomely for an old man to weep for the sins of his youth. Those tears can never be shed either too soon or too late.

II. Some men live to be their own executors for their good name, which they see (not honestly) buried before themselves die: some other, of great place and ill desert, part with their good name and breath at once: there is scarcely a vicious man whose name is not rotten before his carcase. Contrarily, the good man's name is oftentimes heir to his life; either born after the death of the parent, for that envy would not suffer it to come forth before; or perhaps so well grown up in his life-time, that the hope thereof is the staff of his age and joy of his death. A wicked man's name may be feared a while; soon after, it is either forgotten or cursed. The good man either sleepeth with his body in peace, or waketh, as his soul, in glory.

III. Ofttimes those who shew much valour while there is equal possibility of life, when they see a present necessity of death, are found most shamefully timorous. Their courage was before grounded upon hope; that, cut off, leaves them at once desperate and cowardly: whereas men of feebler spirits meet more cheerfully with death, because, though their courage be less, yet their expectation was more.

IV. I have seldom seen the son of an excellent and famous man, excellent; but that an ill bird hath an ill

egg, is not rare ; children possessing, as the bodily diseases, so the vices of their parents. Virtue is not propagated ; vice is, even in them who have it not reigning in themselves. The grain is sown pure, but comes up with chaff and husk. Hast thou a good son ? he is God's, not thine. Is he evil ? nothing but his sin is thine. Help by thy prayers and endeavours, to take away that which thou hast given him, and to obtain from God that which thou hast, and canst not give ; else thou mayest name him a possession, but thou shalt find him a loss.

V. These things be comely and pleasant to see, and worthy of honour from the beholder, a young saint, an old martyr, a religious soldier, a conscionable statesman, a great man courteous, a learned man humble, a silent woman, a child understanding the eye of his parent, a merry companion without vanity, a friend not changed with honour, a sick man cheerful, a soul departing with comfort and assurance.

VI. I have oft observed in merry meetings solemnly made, that somewhat hath fallen out cross, either in the time or immediately upon it ; to season, as I think, our immoderation in desiring or enjoying our friends : and, again, events suspected have proved ever best, God herein blessing our awful submission with good success. In all these human things, indifferency is safe. Let thy doubts be ever equal to thy desires ; so thy disappointment shall not be grievous, because thy expectation was not peremptory.

VII. You shall rarely find a man eminent in sundry faculties of mind, or sundry manuary trades. If his memory be excellent, his fantasy is but dull ; if his fancy be busy and quick, his judgment is but shallow ; if his judgment be deep, his utterance is harsh. Which also holds no less in the activities of the hand : and if it happen, that one man be qualified with skill of divers trades and practise this variety, you shall seldom find such one thriving in his estate. With spiritual gifts it is otherwise ; which are so chained together, that who excels in one, hath some eminency in more, yea, in all. Look upon faith : she is attended with a bevy of graces : he that believes, cannot but have hope ; if hope, patience ; he that believes and hopes, must needs find joy in God ; if joy, love of

God: he that loves God, cannot but love his brother; his love to God breeds piety and care to please, sorrow for offending, fear to offend; his love to men, fidelity and Christian beneficence. Vices are seldom single, but virtues go ever in troops. They go so thick, that sometimes some are hid in the crowd, which yet are, but appear not. They may be shut out from sight; they cannot be severed.

VIII. The heaven ever moves, and yet is the place of our rest. Earth ever rests, and yet is the place of our trouble. Outward motion can be no enemy to inward rest, as outward rest may well stand with inward unquietness.

IX. None live so ill, but they content themselves in somewhat. Even the beggar likes the smell of his dish. It is a rare evil, that hath not something to sweeten it, either in sense or in hope; otherwise, men would grow desperate, mutinous, envious of others, weary of themselves. The better that thing is, wherein we place our comfort, the happier we live; and the more we love good things, the better they are to us. The worldling's comfort, though it be good to him because he loves it, yet, because it is not absolutely and eternally good, it fails him; wherein the Christian hath just advantage of him, while he hath all the same causes of joy refined and exalted, besides more and higher, which the other knows not of. The worldling laughs more, but the Christian is more delighted. These two are easily severed. Thou seest a goodly picture or a heap of thy gold: thou laughest not; yet thy delight is more, than in a jest that shaketh thy spleen. As grief, so joy is not less, when it is least expressed.

X. I have seen the worst natures and most depraved minds not affecting all sins; but still some they have condemned in others, and abhorred in themselves. One exclaims on covetousness, yet he can too well abide riotous good-fellowship; another inveighs against drunkenness and excess, not caring how cruel he be in usury and oppression. One cannot endure a rough and quarrellous disposition, yet gives himself over to unclean and lascivious courses; another hates all wrongs, save wrong to God. One is a civil atheist; another, a religious usurer; a third, an honest drunkard; a fourth, an unchaste justicer; a fifth, a chaste quarreller. I know not whether every devil

excel in all sins : I am sure some of them have denomination from some sins more special. Let no man applaud himself for those sins he wanteth, but condemn himself rather for that sin he hath. Thou censurest another man's sin ; he, thine : God curseth both.

XI. Gold is the heaviest of all metals ; it is no wonder, that the rich man is usually carried downward to his place. It is hard for the soul, clogged with many weights, to ascend to heaven. It must be a strong and nimble soul, that can carry up itself and such a load ; yet Adam and Noah flew up thither with the double monarchy of the world ; the patriarchs, with much wealth ; many holy kings, with massy crowns and sceptres. The burden of covetous desires is more heavy to an empty soul, than much treasure to the full. Our affections give poise or lightness to earthly things. Either abate of thy load, if thou find it too pressing, whether by having less or loving less ; or add to thy strength and activity, that thou mayest yet ascend. It is more commendable, by how much more hard, to climb into heaven with a burden.

XII. A Christian, in all his ways, must have three guides, truth, charity, wisdom ; truth, to go before him ; charity and wisdom, on either hand. If any of the three be absent, he walks amiss. I have seen some do hurt by following a truth uncharitably ; and others, while they would salve up an error with love, have failed in their wisdom, and offended against justice. A charitable untruth and an uncharitable truth, an unwise managing of truth or love, are all to be carefully avoided of him that would go with a right foot in the narrow way.

XIII. God brought man forth at first, not into a wilderness, but a garden ; yet then he expected the best service of him. I never find that he delights in the misery, but in the prosperity of his servants. Cheerfulness pleases him better, than a dejected and dull heaviness of heart. If we can be good with pleasure, he grudgeth not our joy ; if not, it is best to stint ourselves, not for that these comforts are not good but because our hearts are evil ; faulting not their nature, but our use and corruption.

XIV. The homeliest service that we do in an honest calling, though it be but to plough or dig, if done in obe-

dience and conscience of God's commandment, is crowned with an ample reward; whereas the best works for their kind, preaching, praying, offering evangelical sacrifices; if without respect of God's injunction and glory, are loaded with curses. God loveth adverbs; and careth not how good, but how well.

XV. The golden infancy of some hath proceeded to a brazen youth, and ended in a leaden age. All human maturities have their period; only grace hath none. I durst never lay too much hope on the forward beginnings of wit and memory, which have been applauded in children: I knew, they could but attain their vigour; and that, if sooner, no whit the better; for the earlier is their perfection of wisdom, the longer shall be their witless age. Seasonableness is the best in all these things which have their ripeness and decay. We can never hope too much of the timely blossoms of grace, whose spring is perpetual, and whose harvest begins with our end.

XVI. A man must give thanks for somewhat which he may not pray for. It hath been said of courtiers, that they must receive injuries, and give thanks. God cannot wrong his, but he will cross them: those crosses are beneficial. All benefits challenge thanks; yet I have read, that God's children have, with condition, prayed against them, never for them. In good things, we pray both for them and their good use; in evil, for their good use, not themselves: yet we must give thanks for both; for there is no evil of pain, which God doth not; nothing that God doth, is not good: no good thing, but is worthy of thanks.

XVII. One half of the world knows not how the other lives; and therefore the better sort pity not the distressed; and the miserable envy not those who fare better, because they know it not. Each man judges of others' conditions, by his own. The worst sort would be too much discontented, if they saw how far more pleasant the life of others is; and if the better sort, such we call those who are greater, could look down to the infinite miseries of inferiors, it would make them either miserable in compassion, or proud in conceit. It is good sometimes for the delicate rich man to look into the poor man's cupboard; and, seeing God in mercy gives him not to know their

sorrow by experience, to know it yet in speculation. This shall teach him more thanks to God, more mercy to men, more contentment in himself.

XVIII. Such as a man's prayer is for another, it shall be, in time of his extremity, for himself; for though he love himself more than others, yet his apprehension of God is alike for both. Such as his prayer is in a former extremity, it shall be also in death. This way we may have experience even of a thing future. If God have been far off from thee in a fit of thine ordinary sickness, fear lest he will not be nearer thee in thy last. What differs that from this, but in time? Correct thy dulness upon former proofs, or else, at last, thy devotion shall want life before thy body.

XIX. Those that come to their meat as to a medicine, as Augustin reports of himself, live in an austere and Christian temper, and shall be sure not to joy too much in the creature, nor to abuse themselves: those that come to their medicine as to meat, shall be sure to live miserably and die soon. To come to meat, if without a gluttonous appetite and palate, is allowed to Christians; to come to meat as to a sacrifice unto the belly, is a most base and brutish idolatry.

XX. The worst that ever were, even Cain and Judas, have had some fautors that have honoured them for saints; and the serpent that beguiled our first parents, hath, in that name, had divine honour and thanks. Never any man trod so perilous and deep steps, but some have followed and admired him. Each master of heresy hath found some clients, even he that taught all men's opinions were true. Again; no man hath been so exquisite, but some have detracted from him, even in those qualities which have seemed most worthy of wonder to others. A man shall be sure to be backed by some either in good or evil, and, by some shouldered in both. It is good for a man not to stand upon his abettors, but his quarrel; and not to depend upon others, but himself.

XXI. We see thousands of creatures die for our use, and never do so much as pity them; why do we think much to die once for God? They are not ours, so much as we are his; nor our pleasure so much to us, as his glory to him. Their lives are lost to us; ours, but changed to him.

XXII. Much ornament is no good sign. Painting of the face argues an ill complexion of body, a worse mind. Truth hath a face both honest and comely, and looks best in her own colours. But, above all, divine truth is most fair, and most scorneth to borrow beauty of man's wit or tongue. She loveth to come forth in her native grace, like a princely matron; and counts it the greatest indignity to be dallied with as a wanton strumpet: she looks to command reverence, not pleasure; she would be kneeled to, not laughed at. To prank her up in vain dresses and fashions, or to sport with her in a light and youthful manner, is most abhorring from her nature: they know her not, that give her such entertainment; and shall first know her angry, when they do know her. Again, she would be plain, but not base, not sluttish. She would be clad, not garishly, yet, not in rags. She likes as little to be set out by a base soil, as to seem credited with gay colours. It is no small wisdom to know her just guise; but more, to follow it; and so to keep the mean, that, while we please her, we discontent not the beholders.

XXIII. In worldly carriage, so much is a man made of, as he takes upon himself; but such is God's blessing upon true humility, that it still procureth reverence. I never saw a Christian less honoured for a wise neglect of himself. If our dejection proceed from the conscience of our want, it is possible we should be as little esteemed of others, as of ourselves; but if we have true graces, and prize them not at the highest, others shall value both them in us, and us for them, and, with usury, give us that honour we withheld modestly from ourselves.

XXIV. He that takes his full liberty in what he may, shall repent him; how much more in what he should not! I never read of a Christian that repented him of too little worldly delight. The surest course I have still found in all earthly pleasures, to rise with an appetite and to be satisfied with a little.

XXV. There is a time when kings go not forth to warfare: our spiritual war admits no intermission: it knows no night, no winter; abides no peace, no truce. This calls us not into garrison where we may have ease and respite, but into pitched fields continually: we see our enemies in

the face always, and are always seen and assaulted; ever resisting, ever defending; receiving and returning blows. If we be either negligent or weary, we die. What other hope is there, while one fights, and the other stands still? We can never have safety and peace, but in victory. There must our resistance be courageous and constant, where both yielding is death and all treaties of peace mortal.

XXVI. Neutrality in things good or evil is both odious and prejudicial; but in matters of an indifferent nature, is safe and commendable. Herein taking of parts maketh sides and breaketh unity. In an unjust cause of separation, he that favoureth both parts, may perhaps have least love of either side, but hath most charity in himself.

XXVII. Nothing is more absurd, than that epicurean resolution, "Let us eat and drink; to-morrow we shall die;" as if we were made only for the paunch, and lived that we might live; yet there was never any natural man found savour in that meat which he knew should be his last: whereas they should say, "Let us fast and pray; to-morrow we shall die;" for to what purpose is the body strengthened, that it may perish, whose greater strength makes our death more violent? No man bestows a costly roof on a ruinous tenement. That man's end is easy and happy, whom death finds with a weak body and a strong soul.

XXVIII. Sometimes even things in themselves naturally good, are to be refused for those which, being evil, may be an occasion to a greater good. Life is in itself good, and death evil; else David, Elijah, and many excellent martyrs would not have fled, to hold life and avoid death; nor Hezekiah have prayed for it, nor our Saviour have bidden us to flee for it, nor God promised it to his for a reward: yet if in some cases we hate not life, we love not God nor our souls. Herein, as much as in any thing, the perverseness of our nature appears, that we wish death or love life upon wrong causes; we would live for pleasure, or we would die for pain. Job for his sores, Elijah for his persecution, Jonah for his gourd, would presently die, and will needs outface God that it is better for him to die than to live. Wherein we are like to garrison soldiers, that, while they live within safe walls and shew themselves once a day rather for ceremony and pomp than need or

danger, like warfare well enough; but if once called forth to the field, they wish themselves at home.

XXIX. Not only the least, but the worst is ever in the bottom. What should God do with the dregs of our age? When sin will admit thee his client no longer, then God shall be beholden to thee for thy service. Thus is God dealt with in all other offerings: the worst and least sheaf must be God's tenth; the most deformed or simplest of our children must be God's ministers; the uncleanliest and most careless house must be God's temple; the idlest and sleepest hours of the day must be reserved for our prayers; the worst part of our age, for devotion. We would have God give us still of the best, and are ready to murmur at every little evil he sends us; yet nothing is bad enough for him, of whom we receive all. Nature condemns this inequality, and tells us, that he who is the Author of good, should have the best; and he who gives all, should have his choice.

XXX. When we go about an evil business, it is strange how ready the devil is to set us forward, how careful that we should want no furtherances; so that if a man would be lewdly witty, he shall be sure to be furnished with store of profane jests, wherein a loose heart hath double advantage of the conscionable; if he would be voluptuous, he shall want neither objects nor opportunities. The current passage of ill enterprises is so far from giving cause of encouragement, that it should justly fright a man to look back to the author; and to consider that he therefore goes fast, because the devil drives him.

XXXI. In the choice of companions for our conversation, it is good dealing with men of good natures; for though grace exerciseth her power in bridling nature, yet, since we are still men at the best, some swinge she will have in the most mortified. Austerity, sullenness, or strangeness of disposition, and whatsoever qualities may make a man unsociable, cleave faster to our nature, than those which are morally evil. True Christian love may be separated from acquaintance, and acquaintance from entireness. These are not qualities to hinder our love, but our familiarity.

XXXII. Ignorance, as it makes bold, intruding men

carelessly into unknown dangers, so also it makes men oftentimes causelessly fearful. Herod feared Christ's coming, because he mistook it: if that tyrant had known the manner of his spiritual regiment, he had spared both his own fright and the blood of others. And hence it is, that we fear death, because we are not acquainted with the virtue of it. Nothing but innocency and knowledge can give sound confidence to the heart.

XXXIII. Where are divers opinions, they may be all false: there can be but one true; and that one truth oftentimes must be fetched by piece-meal out of divers branches of contrary opinions; for it falls out not seldom, that truth is, through ignorance or rash vehemency, scattered into sundry parts, and, like to a little silver melted amongst the ruins of a burnt house, must be tried out from heaps of much superfluous ashes. There is much pains in the search of it, much skill in finding it: the value of it once found, requites the cost of both.

XXXIV. Affectation of superfluity is, in all things, a sign of weakness; as in words, he that useth circumlocutions to express himself, shews want of memory and want of proper speech; and much talk argues a brain feeble and distempered. What good can any earthly thing yield us, besides its use? and what is it but vanity, to affect that which doth us no good? and what use is in that which is superfluous? It is a great skill to know what is enough, and great wisdom to care for no more.

XXXV. Good things, which in absence were desired, now offering themselves to our presence, are scarcely entertained, or, at least, not with our purposed cheerfulness. Christ's coming to us and our going to him, are, in our profession, well esteemed, much wished; but when he singleth us out by a direct message of death, or by some fearful sign giveth likelihood of a present return, we are as much affected with fear, as before with desire. All changes, although to the better, are troublesome for the time, until our settling. There is no remedy hereof, but inward prevention. Our mind must change before our estate be changed.

XXXVI. Those are the greatest enemies to religion, that are not most irreligious. Atheists, though in them-

selves they be the worst, yet are seldom found hot persecutors of others ; whereas those who in some one fundamental point be heretical, are commonly most violent in oppositions. One hurts by secret infection ; the other, by open resistance : one is careless of all truth ; the other, vehement for some untruth. An atheist is worthy of more hatred ; a heretic of more fear ; both, of avoidance.

XXXVII. Ways, if never used, cannot but be fair ; if much used, are made commodiously passable : if before oft used and now seldom, they become deep and dangerous. If the heart be not at all inured to meditation, it findeth no fault with itself, not for that it is innocent, but secure ; if often, it findeth comfortable passage for its thoughts ; if rarely and with intermissions, tedious and troublesome. In things of this nature, we only escape complaint, if we use them either always or never.

XXXVIII. Our sensual hand holds fast whatsoever delight it apprehendeth ; our spiritual hand easily remitteth, because appetite is stronger in us than grace. Whence it is, that we so hardly deliver ourselves of earthly pleasures which we have once entertained ; and with such difficulty draw ourselves to a constant course of faith, hope, and spiritual joy, or to the renewed acts of them once intermitted. Age is naturally weak, and youth vigorous ; but in us, the old man is strong ; the new, faint and feeble. The fault is not in grace, but in us. Faith doth not want strength ; but we want faith.

XXXIX. It is not good in worldly estates for a man to make himself necessary, for hereupon he is both more toiled and more suspected : but in the sacred commonwealth of the church, a man cannot be engaged too deeply by his service. The ambition of spiritual well-doing breeds no danger. He that doth best, and may worst be spared, is happiest.

XL. It was a fit comparison of worldly cares to thorns ; for as they choke the word, so they prick our souls ; neither the word can grow up amongst them, nor the heart can rest upon them : neither body nor soul can find ease, while they are within or close to us. Spiritual cares are as sharp, but more profitable. They pain us, but leave the soul better. They break our sleep, but for a sweeter

rest. We are not well, but either while we have them, or after we had them. It is as impossible to have spiritual health without these, as to have bodily strength with the other.

XLI. In temporal good things, it is best to live in doubt, not making full account of that which we hold on so weak a tenure; in spiritual, with confidence, not fearing that which is warranted to us by an infallible promise and sure earnest. He lives most contentedly, that is most secure for this world, most resolute for the other.

XLII. God hath in nature given every man inclinations to some one particular calling, which if he follow, he excels; if he cross, he proves a nonproficient and changeable: but all men's natures are equally indisposed to grace, and to the common vocation of Christianity; we are all born heathens. To do well, nature must, in the first, be observed and followed; in the other, crossed and overcome.

XLIII. Good-man is a title given to the lowest: whereas all titles of greatness, worship, honour, are observed and attributed with choice. The speech of the world bewrays their mind; and shews the common estimation of goodness, compared with other qualities. The world therefore is an ill herald, and unskilful in the true styles. It were happy, that goodness were so common; and pity, that it either should not stand with greatness, or not be preferred to it.

XLIV. Amongst all actions, Satan is ever busiest in the best, and most in the best part of the best; as in the end of prayer, when the heart should close up itself with most comfort. He never fears us, but when we are well employed; and the more likelihood he sees of our profit, the more is his envy, and labour to distract us. We should love ourselves as much as he hates us; and therefore strive so much the more towards our good, as his malice striveth to interrupt it. We do nothing, if we contend not when we are resisted. The good soul is ever in contradiction, denying what is granted, and contending for that which is denied; suspecting when it is gainsaid, and fearing liberty.

XLV. God forewarns ere he try, because he would be prevented; Satan steals upon us suddenly by temptations, because he would foil us. If we relent not upon God's premonition, and meet not the lingering pace of his punishments to forestal them, he punisheth more, by how much his warning was more evident and more large. God's trials must be met, when they come; Satan's must be seen, before they come; and if we be not armed ere we be assaulted, we shall be foiled ere we can be armed.

XLVI. It is not good to be continual in denunciation of judgment: the noise to which we are accustomed, though loud, wakes us not, whereas a less, if unusual, stirreth us. The next way to make threatenings contemned is, to make them common. It is a profitable rod that strikes sparingly, and frights somewhat oftener than it smiteth.

XLVII. Want of use causeth disability; and custom, perfection. Those that have not used to pray in their closet, cannot pray in public, but coldly and in form; he that discontinues meditation, shall be long in recovering: whereas the man inured to these exercises, who is not dressed till he have prayed nor hath supped till he have meditated, doth both these well, and with ease. He that intermits good duties, incurs a double loss, of the blessing that followeth good, of the faculty of doing it.

XLVIII. Christianity is both an easy yoke and a hard, hard to take up, easy to bear when once taken. The heart requires much labour, ere it can be induced to stoop under it; and finds as much contentment, when it hath stooped. The worldling thinks religion servility; but the Christian knows whose slave he was till he entered into this service, and that no bondage can be so evil, as freedom from these bonds.

XLIX. It is a wonder how full of shifts nature is, ready to turn over all good purposes. If we think of death, she suggests secretly, "Tush, it shall not come yet:" if of judgment for sin, "This concerns not thee; it shall not come at all:" if of heaven and our labour to reach it, "Trouble not thyself; it will come soon enough alone." Address thyself to pray, "It is yet unseasonable; stay for a better opportunity:" to give alms; "Thou knowest not thine own future wants:" to reprove, "Why needest

thou thrust thyself into wilful hatred?" Every good action hath its let. He can never be good, that is not resolute.

L. All arts are maids to Divinity; therefore they both vail to her and do her service; and she, like a grave mistress, controls them at pleasure. Natural philosophy teacheth, that of nothing can be nothing made, and that from the privation to the habit is no return: divinity takes her up for these; and, upon supernatural principles, teaches her a creation, a resurrection. Philosophy teaches us to follow sense as an infallible guide: divinity tells her, that faith is of things not seen. Logic teaches us first to discourse, then to resolve; Divinity, to assent without arguing. Civil law, teacheth, that long custom prescribeth; divinity, that old things are passed: moral philosophy, that tallying of injuries is justice; divinity, that good must be returned for ill: policy, that better is a mischief than an inconvenience; divinity, that we may not do evil, that good may ensue. The school is well ordered, while divinity keeps the chair; but if any other skill usurp it and check their mistress, there can follow nothing but confusion and atheism.

LI. Much difference is to be made betwixt a revolter and a man trained up in error. A Jew and an Arian both deny Christ's deity, yet this opinion is not, in both, punished with bodily death. Yea, a revolt to a less error is more punishable than education in a capital heresy. Errors of judgment, though less regarded than errors of practice, yet are more pernicious; but none so deadly as theirs that once were in the truth. If truth be not sued to, it is dangerous; but if forsaken, desperate.

LII. It is an ill argument of a good action not well done, when we are glad that it is done. To be affected with the comfort of the conscience of well performing it, is good; but merely to rejoice that the act is over, is carnal. He never can begin cheerfully, that is glad he hath ended.

LIII. He that doth not secret service to God with some delight, doth but counterfeit in public. The truth of any act or passion is then best tried, when it is without witness. Openly, many sinister respects may draw from us a form of religious duties; secretly, nothing but the power of a

good conscience. It is to be feared, God hath more true and devout service in closets, than in churches.

LIV. Words and diseases grow upon us with years. In age, we talk much; because we have seen much and soon after shall cease talking for ever: we are most diseased, because nature is weakest, and death, which is near, must have harbingers. Such is the old age of the world. No marvel if this last time be full of writing and weak discourse, full of sects and heresies, which are the sicknesses of this great and decayed body.

LV. The best ground untilld soonest runs out into rank weeds. Such are God's children; overgrown with security, ere they are aware, unless they be well exercised, both with God's plough of affliction, and their own industry in meditation. A man of knowledge, that is either negligent or uncorrected, cannot but grow wild and godless.

LVI. With us, vilest things are most common; but, with God, the best things are most frequently given. Grace, which is the noblest of all God's favours, is unpartially bestowed upon all willing receivers; whereas nobility of blood and height of place, blessings of an inferior nature, are reserved for few. Herein the Christian follows his Father: his prayers, which are his richest portion, he communicates to all; his substance, according to his ability, to few.

LVII. God therefore gives, because he hath given, making his former favours, arguments for more. Man therefore shuts his hand, because he hath opened it. There is no such way to procure more from God, as to urge him with what he hath done. All God's blessings are profitable and excellent, not so much in themselves, as that they are inducements to greater.

LVIII. God's immediate actions are best at first. The frame of this creation, how exquisite was it under his hand! afterward, blemished by our sin. Man's endeavours are weak in their beginnings, and more perfect by degrees. No science, no device, hath ever been perfect in his cradle; or, at once, hath seen its birth and maturity: of the same nature are those actions which God worketh mediately by us, according to our measure of re-

ceipt. The cause of both is, on the one side, the infiniteness of his wisdom and power which cannot be corrected by any second assays; on the other, our weakness, helping itself by former grounds and trials. He is a happy man that detracts nothing from God's works, and adds most to his own.

LIX. The old saying is more common than true, that those who are in hell, know no other heaven; for this makes the damned perfectly miserable, that, out of their own torment, they see the felicity of the saints, together with their impossibility of attaining it. Sight, without hope of fruition, is a torment alone. Those that here might see God and will not, or do see him obscurely and love him not, shall once see him with anguish of soul and not enjoy him.

LX. Sometimes evil speeches come from good men in their unadvisedness; and sometimes even the good speeches of men may proceed from an ill spirit. No confession could be better than Satan gave of Christ. It is not enough to consider what is spoken or by whom; but whence and for what. The spirit is oftentimes tried by the speech; but other times the speech must be examined by the spirit, and the spirit by the rule of a higher word.

LXI. Greatness puts high thoughts and big words into a man; whereas the dejected mind takes carelessly what offers itself. Every worldling is base-minded, and therefore his thoughts creep still low upon the earth. The Christian both is and knows himself truly great, and thereupon mindeth and speaketh of spiritual, immortal, glorious, heavenly things. So much as the soul stoopeth unto earthly thoughts, so much is it unregenerate.

LXII. Long acquaintance, as it maketh those things which are evil to seem less evil, so it makes good things which at first were unpleasant, delightful. There is no evil of pain, nor no moral good action, which is not harsh at the first. Continuance of evil, which might seem to weary us, is the remedy and abatement of weariness; and the practice of good, as it profiteth, so it pleaseth. He, that is a stranger to good and evil, finds both of them troublesome. God therefore doth well for us, while he exerciseth us with long afflictions; and we do well to

ourselves, while we continually busy ourselves in good exercises.

LXIII. Sometimes, it is well taken by men, that we humble ourselves lower than there is cause: "Thy servant Jacob," saith that good patriarch to his brother, to his inferior. And no less well doth God take these submiss extenuations of ourselves: "I am a worm, and no man. Surely, I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man." But I never find, that any man bragged to God, although in a matter of truth and within the compass of his desert, and was accepted. A man may be too lowly in his dealing with men, even unto contempt; with God, he cannot, but the lower he falleth, the higher is his exaltation.

LXIV. The soul is fed, as the body; starved with hunger, as the body; requires proportionable diet and necessary variety, as the body. All ages and statures of the soul bear not the same nourishment. There is milk for spiritual infants, strong meat for the grown Christian. The spoon is fit for the one, the knife for the other. The best Christian is not so grown, that he need to scorn the spoon; but the weak Christian may find a strong food dangerous. How many have been cast away with spiritual surfeits, because, being but new-born, they have swallowed down big morsels of the highest mysteries of godliness, which they never could digest, but, together with them, have cast up their proper nourishment! A man must first know the power of his stomach, ere he know how, with safety and profit, to frequent God's ordinary.

LXV. It is very hard for the best man, in a sudden extremity of death, to satisfy himself in apprehending his stay, and reposing his heart upon it; for the soul is so oppressed with sudden terror, that it cannot well command itself, till it have digested an evil. It were miserable for the best Christian, if all his former prayers and meditations did not serve to aid him in his last straits, and meet together in the centre of his extremity, yielding, though not sensible relief, yet secret benefit to the soul; whereas the worldly man, in this case, having not laid up for this hour, hath no comfort from God, or from others, or from himself.

LXVI. All external good or evil is measured by sense; neither can we account that either good or ill, which doth neither actually avail nor hurt us. Spiritually, this rule holds not. All our best good is insensible; for all our future (which is the greatest) good, we hold only in hope, and the present favour of God we have many times, and feel not. The stomach finds the best digestion even in sleep, when we least perceive it; and while we are most awake, this power worketh in us either to further strength or disease, without our knowledge of what is done within. And, on the other side, that man is most dangerously sick, in whom nature decays without his feeling, without complaint. To know ourselves happy, is good; but, woe were to us Christians, if we could not be happy, and know it not!

LXVII. There are none that ever did so much mischief to the church, as those that have been excellent in wit and learning. Others may be spiteful enough, but want power to accomplish their malice. An enemy that hath both strength and craft, is worthy to be feared. None can sin against the Holy Ghost, but those who have had former illumination. Tell not me what parts a man hath, but what grace. Honest sottishness is better than profane eminence.

LXVIII. The entertainment of all spiritual events must be with fear or hope, but of all earthly extremities, must be with contempt or derision; for what is terrible is worthy of a Christian's contempt; what is pleasant, to be turned over with a scorn. The mean requires a mean affection, betwixt love and hatred. We may not love them, because of their vanity; we may not hate them, because of their necessary use. It is a hard thing to be a wise host, and to fit our entertainment to all comers; which if it be not done, the soul is soon wasted, either for want of customers, or for the misrule of ill guests.

LXIX. God and man build in a contrary order. Man lays the foundation first; then adds the walls; the roof, last. God began the roof first, spreading out this vault of heaven, ere he laid the base of the earth. Our thoughts must follow the order of his workmanship. Heaven must be minded first, earth afterwards, and so much more, as

it is seen more. Our meditation must herein follow our sense. A few miles give bounds to our view of earth, whereas we may see nearly half the heaven at once. He that thinks most, both of that which is most seen and of that which is not seen at all, is happiest.

LXX. I have ever noted it a true sign of a false heart, to be scrupulous and nice in small matters, negligent in the main; whereas the good soul is still curious in substantial points, and not careless in things of an inferior nature; accounting no duty so small as to be neglected, and no care great enough for principal duties; not so tything mint and cummin, that he should forget justice and judgment; nor yet so regarding judgment and justice, that he should contemn mint and cummin. He that thus misplaces his conscience, will be found either hypocritical or superstitious.

LXXI. It argues the world full of atheists, that those offences which may impeach human society, are entertained with an answerable hatred and rigour; those which do immediately wrong the supreme majesty of God, are turned over with scarce so much as dislike. If we conversed with God as we do with men, his right would be at least as precious to us as our own. All that converse not with God, are without God. Not only those that are against God, but those that are without God, are atheists. We may be too charitable. I fear not to say, that these our last times abound with honest atheists.

LXXII. The best thing corrupted, is worst. An ill man, is the worst of all creatures; an ill Christian, the worst of all men; an ill professor, the worst of all Christians; an ill minister, the worst of all professors.

LXXIII. Naturally, life is before death, and death is only a privation of life; spiritually, it is contrary. As Paul saith of the grain, so may we of man in the business of regeneration; he must die before he can live: yet this death presupposes a life that was once, and should be. God chooses to have the most difficult, first; we must be content with the pain of dying, ere we feel the comfort of life. As we die to nature, ere we live in glory; so we must die to sin, ere we can live to grace.

LXXIV. Death did not first strike Adam, the first sin-

ful man; nor Cain, the first hypocrite; but Abel, the innocent and righteous. The first soul that met with death, overcame death; the first soul that parted from earth, went to heaven. Death argues not displeasure; because he whom God loved best, dies first; and the murderer is punished with living.

LXXV. The lives of most are mis-spent, only for want of a certain end of their actions. Wherein they do, as unwise archers, shoot away their arrows they know not at what mark. They live only out of the present, not directing themselves and their proceedings to one universal scope; whence they alter upon all change of occasions, and never reach any perfection; neither can do other but continue in uncertainty, and end in discomfort. Others aim at one certain mark, but a wrong one. Some, though fewer, level at the right end, but amiss. To live without one main and common end, is idleness and folly; to live to a false end, is deceit and loss: true Christian wisdom both shews the end and finds the way. And, as cunning politicians have many plots to compass one and the same design, by a determined succession; so the wise Christian, failing in the means, yet still fetcheth about to his steady end, with a constant change of endeavours. Such an one only lives to purpose, and at last repents not, that he hath lived.

LXXVI. The shipwreck of a good conscience is the casting away of all other excellencies. It is no rare thing to note the soul of a wilful sinner stripped of all her graces, and, by degrees, exposed to shame; so those whom we have known admired, have fallen to be level with their fellows; and from thence beneath them, to a mediocrity; and afterwards to sottishness and contempt, below the vulgar. Since they have cast away the best, it is just with God to take away the worst, and to cast off them in lesser regards, who have rejected him in greater.

LXXVII. It hath ever been counted more noble and successful, to set upon an open enemy in his own home, than to expect till he set upon us, while we make only a defensive war. This rule serves us for our last enemy, death: whence that old demand of Epicurus is easily answered, "Whether it be better death should come to us,

or that we should meet him in the way :” meet him in our minds, ere he seize upon our bodies. Our cowardliness, our unpreparation, is his advantage ; whereas true boldness in confronting him dismays and weakens his forces. Happy is that soul that can send out the scouts of his thoughts beforehand, to discover the power of death afar off ; and then can resolutely encounter him at unawares, upon advantage. Such a one lives with security, dies with comfort.

LXXVIII. Many a man sends others to heaven, and yet goes to hell himself ; and not few, having drawn others to hell, yet themselves return, by a late repentance, to life. In a good action, it is not good to search too deeply into the intention of the agent, but, in silence, to make our best benefit of the work : in an evil, it is not safe to regard the quality of the person or his success, but to consider the action abstracted from all circumstances, in its own kind. So we shall neither neglect good deeds, because they speed not well in some hands ; nor affect a prosperous evil.

LXXIX. God doth some singular actions, wherein we cannot imitate him ; some, wherein we may not ; most, wherein he may and would fain be followed. He fetcheth good out of evil ; so may we turn our own and others’ sins to private or public good : we may not do evil for a good use, but we must use our evil once done, to good. I hope I shall not offend, to say, that the good use which is made of sins, is as gainful to God, as that which arises from good actions. Happy is that man that can use either his good well, or his evil.

LXXX. There is no difference betwixt anger and madness, but continuance ; for raging anger is a short madness. What else argues the shaking of the hands and lips ; paleness, or redness, or swelling of the face ; glaring of the eyes ; stammering of the tongue ; stamping with the feet ; unsteady motions of the whole body ; rash actions, which we remember not to have done ; distracted and wild speeches ? And madness again is nothing but a continued rage, yea, some madness rageth not. Such a mild madness is more tolerable than frequent and furious anger.

LXXXI. Those that would keep state, must keep aloof off, especially if their qualities be not answerable in height to their place; for many great persons are like a well-wrought picture upon a coarse cloth, which, afar off shews fair, but near-hand the roundness of the thread mars the good workmanship. Concealment of gifts, after some one commended act, is the best way to admiration and secret honour; but he that would profit, must vent himself oft and liberally, and shew what he is, without all private regard. As therefore, many times, honour follows modesty unlooked for, so, contrarily, a man may shew no less pride in silence and obscurity, than others who speak and write for glory. And that other pride is so much the worse, as it is more unprofitable; for whereas those who put forth their gifts, benefit others while they seek themselves, these are so wholly devoted to themselves, that their secrecy doth no good to others.

LXXXII. Such as a man's delights and cares are in health, such are both his thoughts and speeches commonly on his death-bed. The proud man talks of his fair suits; the glutton, of his dishes; the wanton, of his beastliness; the religious man, of heavenly things. The tongue will hardly leave that to which the heart is inured. If we would have good motions to visit us while we are sick, we must send for them familiarly in our health.

LXXXIII. He is a rare man that hath not some kind of madness reigning in him; one, a dull madness of melancholy; another a conceited madness of pride; another, a superstitious madness of false devotion; a fourth, of ambition or covetousness; a fifth, the furious madness of anger; a sixth, the laughing madness of extreme mirth; a seventh, a drunken madness; an eighth, of outrageous lust; a ninth, the learned madness of curiosity; a tenth, the worst madness of profaneness and atheism. It is as hard to reckon up all kind of madneses, as of dispositions. Some are more noted and punished than others; so that the madman in one kind as much condemns another, as the sober man condemns him. Only that man is both good, and wise, and happy, who is free from all kinds of frenzy.

LXXXIV. There be some honest errors wherewith I never found that God was offended; that a husband should

think his own wife comely, although ill-favoured in the eyes of others; that a man should think more meanly of his own good parts, than of weaker in others; to give charitable, though mistaken constructions of doubtful actions and persons; which things are the effects of natural affection, humility, love, and were never censured by God. Herein alone we err, if we err not.

LXXXV. No marvel if the worldling escape earthly afflictions. God corrects him not, because he loves him not. He is base born and begot. God will not do him the favour to whip him. The world afflicts him not, because it loves him; for each man is indulgent to his own. God uses not the rod, where he means to use the sword. The pillory or scourge is for those malefactors who shall escape execution.

LXXXVI. Weak stomachs, which cannot digest large meals, feed oft and little. For our souls, that which we want in measure, we must supply in frequency. We can never fully enough comprehend in our thoughts the joys of heaven, the meritorious sufferings of Christ, the terrors of the second death; therefore we must meditate of them often.

LXXXVII. The same thoughts do commonly meet us in the same places, as if we had left them there, till our return; for that the mind doth secretly frame to itself memorative heads, whereby it recalls easily the same conceits. It is best to employ our mind there, where it is most fixed. Our devotion is so dull, it cannot have too many advantages.

LXXXVIII. I find but one example in all scripture, of any bodily cure which our Saviour wrought by degrees; only the blind man, whose weak faith craved help by others, not by himself; saw men first like trees, then in their trueshape: all other miraculous cures of Christ were done at once, and perfect at first. Contrarily, I find but one example of a soul fully healed, that is, sanctified and glorified, both in a day; all others by degrees and leisure. The steps of grace are soft and short. Those external miracles he wrought immediately by himself; and therefore no marvel if they were absolute, like their Author. The miraculous work of our regeneration he works together with us. He giveth it efficacy; we give it imperfection.

SELECT THOUGHTS.

I. If miracles be ceased, yet marvels will never cease. There is no creature in the world, wherein we may not see enough to wonder at ; for there is no worm of the earth, no spire of grass, no leaf, no twig, wherein we may not see the footsteps of a Deity. The best visible creature is man : now what man is he that can make but a hair, or a straw, much less any sensitive creature? So that no less than an infinite power is seen in every object that presents itself to our eyes. If therefore we look only upon the outsides of these bodily substances, and do not see God in every thing, we are no better than brutish ; making use merely of our sense, without the least improvement of our faith or our reason. Contrary then to the opinion of those men who hold that a wise man should admire nothing, I say that a man truly wise and good should admire every thing, or, rather, that infiniteness of wisdom and omnipotence which shews itself in every visible object. Lord, what a beast am I, that I have suffered mine eyes to take up with shapes, and colours, and quantities ; and have not looked deeper at thee, with awful adoration and wonder, in every parcel of thy great creation ! Henceforth let me see nothing, but thee ; and look at all visible things, but as the mere shadow of a glorious omnipotence.

II. Our affections are then only safe and right, when they are deduced from God and have their rise from heaven. Then only can I take comfort of my love, when I can love my wife, my child, my friend, myself, my pleasures, and whatsoever contentments in God. Thus I may be sure not to offend, either in the object or measure. No man can, in God, love whom he should not, nor immoderately.

rately love whom he should. This holy respect doth both direct and limit him, and shuts up his delights in the conscience of a lawful fruition. The like must be said of our joy, and fear, and grief, and whatever other affection; for we cannot derive our joy from God, if we place it upon any sinful thing, or if we exceed in the measure of things allowed; we cannot fetch our fear from heaven, if it be cowardly and desperate; nor our grief, if it be merely worldly and heartless. And if our affections do begin from above, they will surely end there, closing up in that God who is the author and orderer of them. And such as our affections are, such will be the whole disposition of the soul, and the whole carriage of our actions: these are the feet of the soul, and which way the feet walk, the whole man goes. Happy is the man that can be so far the master of himself, as to entertain no affections but such as he takes upon the rebound from heaven.

III. Whence is this delicate scent in the rose and violet? It is not from the root; that smells of nothing: not from the stalk; that is as senseless as the root: not from the earth whence it grows, which contributes no more to these flowers, than to the grass that grows by them: not from the leaf: not from the bud before it be disclosed, which yields no more fragrance than the leaf, or stalk, or root: yet here I now find it. Neither is it here by any miraculous way; but in an ordinary course of nature, for all violets and roses of this kind yield the same redolence. It cannot be, but that it was potentially in that root and stem from which the flowers proceed; and there placed, and thence drawn, by that Almighty power which hath given these admirable virtues to several plants, and educes them in his due seasons to these excellent perfections. It is the same hand that works spiritually in his elect. Out of the soil of the renewed heart, watered with the dew of heaven and warmed with the beams of his Spirit, God can and in his own season doth bring forth those sweet odours of grace and holy dispositions, which are most pleasing to himself; and if those excellencies be so closely lodged in their bosoms, that they do not discover themselves at all times, it should be no more strange to us, than that this rose and violet are not to be found but in their own months. It is

enough, that the same virtue is still in the root, though the flower be vanished.

IV. A man that looks at all things through the consideration of eternity, makes no more of a man, than of a flower; that lasts some days, he lasts some years; at their period, both fade. Now what difference is there to be made betwixt days and years, in the thought of an eternal duration? Herein therefore I have a great advantage of a carnal heart. Such a one, bounding his narrow conceits with the present condition, is ready to admire himself and others, for what they have or are; and is therefore dejected upon every miscarriage; whereas I behold myself, or that man in all his glory, as vanishing, only measuring every man's felicity by the hopes and interest which he hath in a blessed eternity.

V. When I am dead and forgotten, the world will be as it is; the same successions and varieties of seasons, the same revolutions of heaven, the same changes of earth and sea, the like occurrents of natural events and human affairs. It is not in my power to alter the course of things, or to prevent what must be. What should I do, but quietly take my part of the present, and humbly leave the care of the future to that all-wise Providence which ordereth all things, even the most cross events, according to his most holy and just purposes?

VI. The scripture is the sun; the church is the clock, whose hand points us to, and whose sound tells us, the hour of the day. The sun we know to be sure, and regularly constant in his motion; the clock, as it may fall out, may go too fast or too slow. We are wont to look at and listen to the clock, to know the time of the day; but where we find the variation sensible, to believe the sun against the clock, not the clock against the sun. As then we should condemn him of much folly, that should profess to trust the clock rather than the sun, so we cannot but justly tax the mis-credulity of those who will rather trust to the church than to the scripture.

VII. What marvellous high respects hath God given to man, above all his other visible creatures! What a house hath he put him into! how gorgeously arched! how richly paved! Wherefore serves all the furniture of

heaven and earth, but for his use? What delicate provision hath that bountiful hand made for his palate, both of meats and liquors, by land and sea! What rich ornaments hath he laid up for him in his wardrobe of earth and waters! And wherefore serves the various music of birds, but to please his ear? For, as for the brute creatures, all harmony to them is but as silence. Wherefore serves the excellent variety of flowers, surpassing Solomon in all his glory, but to please his eye? Mere grass is more acceptable to beast. Yea, what creature but he, is capable to survey God's wonders in the deep? to contemplate the great fabric of the heavens? to observe the glorious bodies and regular motions of the sun, moon, stars? And, which exceeds all conceivable mercies, who but he, is capable of that celestial glory which is within that beautiful contiguation? to be a companion of the blessed angels; yea, to be a limb of the mystical body of the eternal Son of God, and to partake with him of his everlasting and incomprehensible glory? "Lord, what is man, that thou art thus mindful of him?" And how utterly unworthy are we even of common mercies, if we return not to our God more advantage of glory, than those poor creatures that were made for us, and which cannot in nature be sensible of his favours!

VIII. How plain is it, that all sensitive things are ordered by an instinct from their Maker! He that gives them being, puts into them their several dispositions, inclinations, faculties, operations. If we look to birds, the mavis, the blackbird, the red breast, have throats tunable to any note, as we daily see they may be taught strains utterly varying from their natural tones; yet they all naturally have the same songs and accents, different from each other, and fully according to their own kind, so that every mavis hath the same ditty with his fellows. If we mark the building of their nests, each kind observes its own fashion and materials; some, clay; others, moss, hair, sticks: yea, if their very motions and restings, they are conformed to their own feather, different from others. If we look to beasts, they all, untaught, observe the fashions of their several kinds. Galen observes, that when he was dissecting a she-goat big with young, a kid, then ready to be yeaned, starts out, and walks up and down the room; and there

being in the same place set several vessels of oil, honey, water, milk, the new fallen kid smells at them all, and, refusing the rest, falls to lapping of the milk ; whereupon he justly infers, that nature stays not for a teacher. Neither is it other in flies, and all sorts of the meanest vermin. All bees build alike, and order the commonwealth of their hive in one manner : all ants keep their own way, in their housing, journeys, provisions : all spiders do as perfectly and uniformly weave their web, as if they had been apprentices to the trade. The same instincts are seen also in the rational creatures ; although in most cases overruled by their higher faculties. What an infinite Providence then is this we live under, that hath distributed to every creature, as a several form, so several inclinations, qualities, motions, proper to their own kind, and different from other ; and keeps them in this constant uniformity and variety, for the delight and contentment of man ! O God, that I could be capable of enough wondering at thy great works ! that I could be enough humbled under the sense of my own incapacity ! that I could give thee so much more glory, as I find more vileness in myself !

IX. When I saw my precious watch (now through an unhappy fall grown irregular) taken asunder, and lying scattered upon the workman's shop-board ; so as here lay a wheel, there the balance ; here one gimmer, there another ; strait my ignorance was ready to think, when and how will all these ever piece together again in their former order ? But when the skilful artisan had taken it a while in hand and curiously pinned the joints, it now began to return to its wonted shape and constant motion, as if it had never been disordered. How could I choose but see in this the just emblem of a distempered church and state ? Wherein if all seem disjointed, and every wheel laid aside by itself, so as an unknowing beholder would despair of a redress ; yet if it shall please the great Artist of heaven to put his hand unto it, how soon might it return to a happy resettlement ! Even so, blessed Lord, for thy great mercy's sake, make up the breaches of thy Sion, and repair the ruins of thy Jerusalem.

X. We are, and we are not, all one man's children. Our bodies once met in one root, but our minds and dis-

positions do so differ as if we had never been of kin. One man is so gentle and plausible, that he would fain please all; another is so churlish and dogged, that he cares not whom he displeases, and can hardly be well pleased with himself: one, so sparing and pinching, that he grudges himself necessities; another, so vainly lavish, that he cares not how he squanders his estate: one is tenderly pitiful; another, mercilessly cruel: one, religiously devout; another, wildly profane: one, cowardly fearful; another, deperately courageous: one, jovially cheerful and lightsome; another, sad and dumpish even to stupidity: one, petulant and wanton; another, austere continent; one humble and low-conceited of rich endowments; another, swollen big with a little. He did never read men to purpose, that is too much troubled with the harsh and unpleasing contrariety of humours which he meets with in the world; and he shall be too unthankful to God, that finding himself better composed than others, knows not whither to ascribe it; and too neglective of himself, that finding his own mind distempered, labours not to rectify it.

XI. Nature, law, and grace, divide all the ages of the world. Now as it is in man, who is a lesser world, that in every day there is a resemblance of his whole life; the morning is his childhood, the mid-day his youth, the evening his old age; so is it in this greater world. The dim break of day was the state of nature; and this was the nonage of the world, wherein the light of knowledge, both of human and divine things, was but weak and obscure. The sun was risen higher in the state of the law; but yet not without thick mists and shadows, till the high noon of that true Sun of Righteousness, who personally shone forth to the world; upon whose vertical point began the age of grace, that still continues; which is the clear afternoon and full vigour of the world, though now in its sensible declination: after this there shall be no time but eternity. These then are they which both the prophets and apostles have styled the last days; not only in respect of the times that went before them, but in regard that no time shall follow them. Neither have we reason to boggle at the large latitude of sixteen hundred years: there was

neither of the two other periods of age, but were longer than this. Besides however childhood and youth have their fixed terms which they ordinarily pass not, yet the duration of old age is indefinite. We have, in our youth, known some grey-heads that have continued vigorous, till we have lived to match them in the colour of their livery, And if this be, as it is, the evening of the world, do we not see much difference of time in the shutting in of the light? A summer's evening is a winter's day. But if these were to the apostles the last days, how can they be other than the last hour, yea, the last minute unto us? Why do we not put ourselves into a constant expectation of the end of all things, and set ourselves in a meet posture for the receipt of our returning Saviour?

XII. It is a feeling and experimental expression that the apostle gives of a Christian, that "he looks not on the things which are seen." Not that his eyes are so dim as old Isaac's, that he cannot discern them; or that his inward senses are so stupified, that he cannot judge of their true value; but that taking an exact view of these earthly things, he descries so much vanity in them, as that he finds them not worthy to be looked at with the full bent of his desires; like as it is not the mere sight of a strange beauty that is forbidden, for a man may as well look upon a fair face as upon a good picture, but a settled and fixed aspect, that feeds the eye and draws the heart to a sinful concupiscence. Thus doth not the Christian look upon the things that are seen, as making them the full scope and aim of his desires and affections: so far, he takes notice of them, as to make his best, that is, lawful and moderate, use of them; not so as to make them the chief object of his contemplation, the main drift of his cares. It is well observed by St. Basil, that as there are two contrary ways, the broad and the narrow, so there are two guides as contrary, sense and faith. Sense presents to us the pleasing delights of this world, on the one side; on the other, the present afflictions and persecutions that attend a good profession: faith lays before us the glorious things of a future life, and the endless miseries and torments abiding for sinful souls in the world to come. Now it is not for every one to deny all credit

to his sense, alluring him with all present and visible pleasures, and discouraging him with the terror and pain of present and visible afflictions; and to yield himself, hood-winked, to be led by faith, fore-promising only better things afar off, and fore-admonishing him of dangers, future and invisible. Faith only is that heroical virtue which makes a man, with a holy contempt, to overlook all the pleasing baits of the world; and with a brave courage and fortitude, to despise all the menaces and painful inflictions of his present fury. This works our eyes not to look upon the things which we cannot but see, the present shews of the world, whether alluring or terrifying. Had Lot but looked back on Sodom, the pleasant plain of Sodom that lay like the garden of God behind his back, he had never escaped into the mountain. Had the glorious protomartyr fixed his eyes only upon his persecutors, his heart could not but have failed to see the fire in their faces, the sparkling of their eyes, the grinding of their teeth, the bending of their brows, the stopping of their ears, their furious running upon him, their violent halings and draggings, and, lastly, a whole volley of stones discharged mortally upon him; he had been utterly daunted with such an impetuosity of death: but he, as not seeing any of this pomp and ostentation of horror, looks up steadfastly to heaven, and there sees that which might well make him blind to all other visible objects, the heavens open, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and, upon this sight, he shut up his eyes and slept. The true Christian then hath, with holy Job, made a covenant with his eyes not to look upon either the cruel insolencies of the raging world with fear and dejectedness, or on the tempting vanities of the world with amorous glances; but with a sober and constant resolution entertains the objects of both kinds. Very justly did Tertullian jeer that heathen philosopher, who pulled out his eyes to avoid concupiscence; and can tell him, that a Christian can hold his eyes, and yet behold beauty, unbewitched; and can be, at once, open-eyed to nature, and blind to lust: and what the apostle said of the use, he can practice, of the sight of the world and earthly objects; he can so behold them, as if he beheld them not. How oft have we,

in a deep study, fixed our eyes upon that which we the while thought not upon, neither perceived that we saw ! So doth the Christian to these worldly glories, pleasures, pleasures, profits, while his mind and affections are on “ the things above, where Christ sitteth on the right-hand of God.” There, Lord, let me behold those things which cannot yet be seen, but shall once, in the sight of them, make me blessed. And, let me not look on the things that are seen ; for “ the things that are seen, are temporal ; but the things which are not seen, are eternal.”

XIII. There is not more strangeness, than significance, in that charge of the apostle, “ that we should put on the Lord Jesus Christ.” The soul is, as it were, a body ; not really and properly so, according to the gross error of Tertullian, but by way of allusion. This body of the soul then must not be naked, but must be clad. As our first parents were ashamed of their bodily nakedness, and so still are all their not savage posterity, so must we of our spiritual. Every sinner is naked : those rags that he hath, are so far from hiding his nakedness, that they are part of it : his fairest moralities are but glittering sins, and his sins are his nakedness. Aaron “ had made Israel naked to their shame,” *Exod. xxxii. 25* ; not so much in that they were stript of their ear-rings, as that they were enwrapped in the sin of idolatry. No marvel if we run away and hide us from the presence of God, as our first parents did, while we are guilty to ourselves of our spiritual deformity. As then we are bodily naked, when we come into the world, so we are spiritually naked, while we are of the world ; neither can it be either safe or comely for us, till we be covered. There is no clothing can fit the soul, but the Lord Jesus Christ : all other robes in the wardrobe of earth or heaven, are too short, too strait ; like those which the scorn of Hanun put upon David’s messengers, reaching but to the hams ; for, though the soul of man be finite, the sin of the soul is scarcely so ; and that sin must be covered, else there can be no safety for the soul ; according to that of the psalmist, “ Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.” *Psalm xxxii. 1*. None therefore but the robes of an infinite righteousness, can cover the soul so woefully dressed ;

none therefore but the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God blessed for ever, can cover the soul, that it may not appear unrighteous; or can cleanse the soul, that it may not be unrighteous: and cleansed it must be, ere the Lord Jesus can be put on: we shall wrong his perfect holiness, if we think we can slip him on, as a case over our beastly rags. It is with us, as with Joshua the high priest; the filthy garments must first be taken off, and then the Lord shall say unto us, "Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment," Zech. iii. 4. We put on a garment when we apply it all over to our body, so as that part which is clothed, appears not, but is defended from the air and from the eye: if we have truly put on the Lord Jesus, nothing of ours is seen, but Christ is all in all to us; although this application goes yet deeper; for we so put him on, that we not only put ourselves into him, but also put him into ourselves, by a mutual kind of spiritual incorporation. We put him on then upon our intellectual parts, by knowing him, by believing on him. "This is eternal life, to know thee and whom thou hast sent," saith our Saviour: and as for faith, no grace doth so sensibly apprehend him and make him so feelingly ours. We put him on upon our wills and affections, when we take pleasure in him, when we love him, delight in him, and prefer him to our chiefest joy. Thus do we put him on; as our Lord, in our humble and dutiful subjection; as our Jesus, in our faithful affiance; as Christ, the anointed of God, to be our King, in all holy obedience; our priest, in our willing consecration to him; our prophet, in our cheerful readiness to be instructed by him. How happy are we, if we be thus decked. We prank up these poor carcasses of ours gaily with no small expense; and when we have done, the stuff, or the fashion, or both, wears out to nothing; but here is a garment that will never be out of fashion; "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever;" yea, the same to us. Here, we put him on in grace; there, in eternal glory. The Israelites were forty years in the wilderness, yet their shoes not worn, their apparel not impaired; but this attire shall not only hold good in the time of our wandering in this desert, but

after we are come into the Canaan of glory; and is best, at last. Wherefore do we put on our choicest attire on some high days, but to testify the cheerfulness of our hearts? "Let thy garment be white," saith the preacher, "for now God accepteth thy works," Eccles. ix, 7, 8. Mephibosheth changed not his raiment, since David went out; as one that would have the sorrow of his heart seen in the neglect of his clothes, although many a one, under a gay coat, hath a heavy heart; but this attire doth not only testify, but make cheerfulness in the soul; "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased;" "In thy presence is the fulness of joy." What can this apparel of ours do, but keep us from a blast or from a shower? It is so far from safeguarding the soul, that it many times wounds it, and that to the death. It was one of the main quarrels against the rich glutton, that he was every day clothed in purple and bysse. How many souls shall once wish, that their bodies had been ever either naked or clad with hair-cloth! But this array, as it is infinitely rich and beautiful, so it is as surely defensative of the soul; and is no less than armour of proof against all assaults, all miseries. What a deal of cost and pains do we bestow upon these wretched bodies of ours, only to make them pleasing and lovely to the eye of some beholders, as miserable perhaps as ourselves! and yet when we have done all, we are, it may be, no better than hard-favoured and unhandsome creatures; and contemptible in those eyes from whom we desired most approbation. Jezabel, for all her licking, is cast out of the window, and trodden to dirt in the streets. But this robe we cannot wear, and not be amiable in the eyes of the Holiest. "Behold thou art fair, my beloved; behold, thou art fair, and there is no spot in thee," Cant. i. 15. Lo, in this case, the apparel makes the man. Neither is it in the power of any spiritual deformity to make us other than lovely in the sight of our God, while we have Christ put on upon us. Whatever therefore becomes of the outward man, let it be my care, that my soul be vested with my Lord Jesus: so shall I be sure to be safe, rich, amiable, here; and hereafter glorious. It was part of our Saviour's charge upon the

mount, "Take no care what to put on," but it must be the main care of our lives how to put on Christ upon our souls. This is the prime stole, wherewith the father of the prodigal graceth his returned son. The heaven of heavens is not worth such another. When I have once got this on my back, I shall say, though in a contrary sense, with the spouse in the Canticles, "I have put on my coat, how shall I put it off? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?" Cant. v. 3.

XIV. With how devout passion does the psalmist call to all the works of the Almighty to praise him! as well supposing, that every creature, even those that have no tongues, to speak for themselves, yet have a tongue to praise their Maker. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech, nor language, where their voice is not heard." Psalm xix. 1, 2. Neither is the very earth defective in this duty. Every plant says, "Look on me, and acknowledge the life, colour, form, smell, fruit, force, that I have from the power of my Creator." Every worm and fly says, "Look on me, and give God the praise of my living, sense, and motion." Every bird says, "Hear me, and praise that God who hath given me these various feathers, and taught me these several notes." Every beast, while he bellows, bleats, brays, barks, roars, says, "It is God that hath given me this shape, this sound." Yea, the very mute fishes are, in their very silence, vocal, in magnifying the infinite wisdom and power of him that made them, and placed them in those watery habitations? "Let every thing that hath breath," saith the psalmist, "praise the Lord." Yea, the very winds whistle and the sea roars out the praise of the Almighty; who both raises and allays them at pleasure. What a shame were it for man, to whom alone God hath given an understanding heart, a nimble tongue, and articulate language, wherein he can express his rational thoughts, to be wanting to this so universal devotion; and to be as insensible to the works of God, as the ground that he treads upon! If others shall be thus unthankfully dumb, yet "Praise thou the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. While I

live, will I praise the Lord : I will sing praises to my God, whilst I have my being." Psalm. ciii. 1 ; Psalm cxlvi. 2. But, alas, Lord, thou knowest I cannot so much as will to praise thee, without thee. Do thou fill my heart with holy desires, and my mouth with songs of thanksgiving.

XV. It may seem a strange errand upon which our Saviour tells us he came into the world ; " I come to send fire on the earth." When the two fervent disciples would have had fire sent down from heaven upon but a Samaritan village, our Saviour rebuked them ; and told them they knew not of what spirit they were ; yet here he makes it his own business to send fire on earth. Alas, may we think we have fire too much already ! How happy were it rather, if the fire which is kindled in the world, were well quenched ! And what is the main drift of the prince of darkness, but fire ? if not to send fire down from heaven upon the inhabitants of the earth, yet to send the inhabitants of the earth down to the fire of hell. As then we find divers kinds of material fire, celestial, elementary, domestic, artificial, natural ; so there is no less variety of spiritual fires. It was in fiery, cloven tongues, wherein the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles in their Pentecost ; and even this fire did our Saviour come to send down on the earth, John xvi. 7. " Thy word was in me as fire," saith the prophet, Jer. v. 14 ; and, " Did not our hearts burn within us," said the two disciples in their walk to Emmaus, " while he talked with us ?" This fire he also came to send. Heavenly love and holy zeal are fire ; " Many waters cannot quench love," Cant. viii. 7 ; " My zeal hath consumed me," saith the psalmist, Psalm cxix. 139 : and these fires our Saviour came to send into the hearts of men. Holy thoughts are no other than the beams of celestial fire ; " My heart was hot within me : while I was musing, the fire burned ;" Psalm xxxix. 3 : and these we know he sends. " He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire," Psalm civ. 4 ; Heb. i. 7 ; these he sends forth to the earth " to minister for them that shall be heirs of salvation." Besides these, afflictions and persecutions are fire ; " We have passed through fire and water." " Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as if some strange thing had happened to you, 1 Pet. iv.

12; and even these are of his sending; "The Lord hath kindled a fire in Zion, and it hath devoured the foundation thereof," Lam. iv. 11; there is no evil in the city but the Lord hath done it. "The Lord hath done that which he had devised: he hath thrown down and not pitied," Lam. ii. 17. But this expression of our Saviour goes yet deeper, and alludes to the effect of separation which follows upon the fire of our trial. When the lump of ore is put into the furnace, the fire tries the pure metal from the dross; and makes an actual division of the one from the other; so doth Christ by his word and Spirit. Even he that is the Prince and God of peace, comes to set division in the world. Surely there are holy quarrels worthy of his engagement; for as the flesh lusteth and warreth against the spirit, so the spirit fighteth against the flesh; and this duel may well beseem God for the Author, and the Son of God for the setter of it: these second blows make a happy fray. Nothing is more properly compared, than discord to fire, Judges ix. 20. This Christ (the first thing he does) sets in every heart. There is all quietness, secure ease, and self-contentment in the soul, till Christ come there. How should it be other, when Satan sways all without resistance? But when once Christ offers to enter, there are straight civil wars in the soul betwixt the old man and the new; and it fares with the heart, as with a house divided in itself, wherein the husband and the wife are at variance; nothing is to be heard but unquiet janglings, open brawlings, secret opposition: the household takes part, and professes a mutual vexation. This spiritual self-division, wherever it is, though it be troublesome, yet it is cordial: it puts the soul into the state of Rebekah's womb, which barren, yielded no pain; but when an Esau and Jacob were conceived and struggling within, yielded for the time no ease; yet this was that which caused her just joy, that she had not so much children, as nations in her womb: even so the trouble of this inward conflict is abundantly requited with the joy of this assurance, that now Christ is come into our soul, and is working his own desired ends in and upon us. Let vain and sensual hearts please themselves in their inward peace and calmness; there cannot be a greater sign of gracelessness and disfa-

vour of God ; “ When they shall say Peace, Peace ; then sudden destruction cometh.” The old word was, “ No safety in war ;” here it is contrary. It is this intestine war of the heart with fire and sword to our corruptions, that must bring us true rest for the present ; and, hereafter eternal peace and happiness. Now, Lord, since it is thy desire, that this fire should be kindled, kindle thou and enflame my heart with a fervent desire and endeavour, that this thy desire may be accomplished in me. Set me at war with myself, that I may be at peace with thee.

XVI. In all that we have to do with God, he justly requires and expects from us an awful disposition of heart towards his infiniteness. Hereupon it was, that he delivered his law in thunder, fire, smoke, and all dreadful magnificence ; and when, upon the same day, he would send down his Spirit for the propagation of the gospel, it was done with an astonishing majesty ; with a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and with the apparition of cloven and fiery tongues, Acts ii. 2, 3. And as it was thus in the descent of the Holy Ghost in the miraculous gifts, so it is in the sanctifying graces ; seldom ever doth God by them seize upon the heart, but with a vehement concussion going before. That of St. Paul’s conversion was extraordinary and miraculous, but, in some degree, it is thus in every soul : we are struck down first, and are made sensible of our spiritual blindness, ere our full call be accomplished. As it was with Elijah in the mount of Horeb, there came first a strong wind that tore the rocks and mountains, and after that an earthquake, then a fire, before the still small voice ; so it is usually in our breasts : ere the comfortable voice of God’s Spirit speak to our hearts, there must be some blusterings and flashes of the law. It is our honour and his favour, that we are allowed to love God ; it is our duty to fear him. We may be too familiar in our love ; we cannot be too awful in our fear.

XVII. All valuations of these outward things are arbitrary, according to the opinion of their pleasure or their rarity, or the necessity of their use. Did not men’s minds set a price upon metals, what were they better than some other entrails of the earth ; or one better than other ? If,

by public law, the mint were ordained to be only supplied by our stannaries, how currently would they pass, for more precious than silver mines ! To an Indian, a bracelet of worthless beads is estimated above his gold : a hungry Esau values a mess of pottage above his birth-right. In the siege of Samaria, an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and a cab of doves' dung for five pieces ; 2 Kings vi. 25. We have heard that those of Angola have valued a dog at the price of many slaves. In all these earthly commodities, the market rises and falls according to conceit and occasion : neither is there any intrinsical and settled worth in any of them : only spiritual things, as virtue and grace, are good in themselves, and so carry their infinite value in them, that they make their owner absolutely rich and happy. When therefore I see a rich man hugging bags and admiring his wealth, I look upon that man with pity, as knowing the poorness of that pelf wherein he placeth his felicity : neither can I behold him with other eyes, than those wherewith a discreet European sees a savage Indian priding himself in those trifles, which our children have learned to contemn. On the other side, when I see a man rich in the endowments of mind, well fraught with knowledge, eminent in goodness, and truly gracious, I shall rise up to that man, how homely soever his outside be, as the most precious and excellent piece which this world can afford.

XVIII. Should I but see an angel, I should look, with Manoah, to die no other death, than the sight of that glory ; and yet even that angel is fain to hide his face, as not able to behold the infinite majesty of God, his Creator. When Moses did but talk with God in the mount for forty days, his face did so shine, that the Israelites could not look upon the lustre of his countenance : even the very presence of the divine majesty not only hath, but communicates glory. Lord, that I could see but some glimpse of the reflection of those glorious beams of thine upon my soul, how happy should I be in this vision, whose next degree is perfectly beatifical !

XIX. As good, so evil, is apt to be communicative of itself ; and this as much the more, as it meets with subjects more capable of evil than good. The breath of a plague-

sick man taints the air round about him ; yea, the very sight of blear eyes infects the sound ; and one yawning mouth stretcheth many jaws. How many have we known, that have been innocent in their retiredness, miserably debauched with lewd conversation ! Next to being good, is to consort with the virtuous. It is the most merciful improvement of a holy power, to separate the precious from the vile. It is the highest praise of a constant goodness, for a Lot to be righteous in the midst of Sodom.

XX. We are all apt to put off the blame of our miscarriages from ourselves. Even in paradise we did so : “ It was the woman,” saith Adam : “ It was the serpent,” saith the woman. How have we heard fond gamesters cast the blame of their ill-luck upon the standers by, who intermeddled nothing, but by a silent eye-sight ! So the idolatrous Pagans of old, though flagitiously wicked, yet could impute their public judgments to none but the Christians, whose innocence only was their protection from utter ruin. So foolishly partial doth our self-love render us to our own demerits, that all are guilty save ourselves. Yea, rather than we will want shifts, our very stars shall be blamed ; which are no more accessory to our harms, than our eyes are to the eclipses of their most eminent lights : as, on the contrary, we are ready to arrogate unto ourselves those blessings which the mere bounty of divine Providence hath cast upon us ; whereto we could not contribute so much as a hand to receive them, but by the mercy of the Giver. It cannot be well with me, till I have learned to correct this palpable injustice in both, challenging to myself all my errors and guilt of sufferings, and yielding to God the praise of his own free and gracious beneficence.

XXI. How profitable and beneficial a thing is affliction, especially to some dispositions, more than other ! I see some trees, that will not thrive unless their roots be laid bare, unless, besides pruning, their bodies be gashed and sliced ; others that are too luxuriant, except divers of their blossoms be seasonably pulled off, yield nothing. I see too rank corn, if it be not timely eaten down, may yield something to the barn, but little to the granary. I see some full bodies, that can enjoy no health without strong evacuations, blood-lettings, fontinels. Such is the con-

dition of our spiritual part : it is a rare soul, that can be kept in any constant order without these smarting remedies. I confess mine cannot. How wild had I run, if the rod had not been over me ! Every man can say he thanks God for ease ; for me, I bless God for my troubles.

XXII. When I consider what an insensible atom man is, in comparison with the whole body of the earth ; and what a mere centre-point the earth is, in comparison with the vast circumference of heaven ; and what an almost infinite distance there is betwixt this point the earth, and that large circle of the firmament ; and therewithal think of the innumerable number and immense greatness of those heavenly luminaries ; I cannot but apprehend how improbable it is, that those stars should, at such a distance distinguish betwixt one man and another, betwixt one limb of the same body and another, betwixt one spot of earth and another ; and, in so great a mixture and confusion of influences, should give any distinct intimation of particular events in nature, and much more of mere contingencies of arbitrary affairs. As for the moon, by reason of her vicinity to the earth and sensible predominance over moisture ; and for the sun, the great magazine of light and heat ; I acknowledge their powerful, but impartial operations upon this whole globe of earth and water and every part of it, not without just wonder and astonishment. The other stars may have their several virtues and effects, but their marvellous remoteness, and my undiscernible nothingness, may seem to forbid any certain intelligence of their distinct workings upon me. But whether these glorious lights give or take any notice of such an imperceptible mite as I, sure I am, there is great reason I should take notice of them, of their beauteous lustre, of their wonderful magnitude, of their regular motion ; and be transported with admiration of that omnipotent power, wisdom, providence, which created this goodly and mighty host of heaven, and guides them in their constant march, without the least deviation, from their first setting out to the last moment of their final conflagration. O the narrowness of my wretched heart, that affords not room enough for wonder at that which I cannot but see !

XXIII. It becomes not us to be niggardly, where our

Saviour intends bounty. How glad should we be rather to amplify the benefit of the great work of our Redeemer! But surely I cannot see upon what warrant that favour is grounded, that enlargeth the fruit of Christ's redemption to the angels. The good needed it not; the evil were not capable of it: only mankind was captived, and redeemable by that invaluable ransom. Doubtless those blessed spirits have their part in the joy and gratulation of the infinite mercy of our deliverance; for if they rejoice at the conversion of one sinner, what triumph do we think there is in heaven at the universal redemption of all believers! The propriety of this favour hath reason to engage us so much the more. Lord, thy mercy is free and boundless: thou wouldest pass by the lapsed angels, and leave them in their sin and their chains, and rescue only miserable man out of their hell. O for a heart, that might be, in some measure, answerable to so infinite mercy; and that might be no less captived to thy love, than it is freed by thy redemption!

XXIV. Men do commonly wrong themselves with a groundless expectation of good, fore-promising to themselves all fair terms in their proceedings and all happy success in the issue, boding nothing to themselves but what they wish. Even the man after God's own heart could say, "In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved." Wherein their misreckoning makes their disappointment so much the more grievous. Had not David made such account of the strength and stability of his mountain, it could not have so much troubled him to have it levelled with the plain. On the contrary, the evils which we look for, fall so much the less heavily, by how much we are fore-prepared for their entertainment. Whatever by-accidents I may meet withal besides, I have two fixed matches that I must inevitably encounter with, age and death; the one is attended with many inconveniences; the other, with much horror. Let me not flatter myself with hopes of jollity and ease. My comforts for heaven shall, I trust, never fail me; but as for the present world, it shall be well for me, if I can without too much difficulty, scramble out of the necessary miseries of life; and, without too much sorrow, crawl to my grave.

XXV. Heaven hath many tongues that talk of it, more eyes to behold it, but few hearts that rightly affect it. Ask any Christian especially, whom ye shall meet with, he will tell you, thither he shapes his course; there he hath pitched his hopes; and would think himself highly wronged by that man who should make doubt of either his interest or speed: but if we cast our eyes upon the lives of men, or they reflect their eyes upon their own bosoms, the hypocrisy will too palpably discover itself; for surely which way soever the faces look, the hands and feet of most men move hellward. If malice, fraud, cruelty, oppression, injustice, excess, uncleanness, pride, contention, covetousness, lies, heresies, blasphemies, disobedience be the way thither, woe is me, how many walk in that wide and open road to destruction! But even there where the heart pretends to innocence, let a man strictly examine his own affections, he will find them so deeply earthed, that he shall be forced to confess his claim to heaven is but fashionable! Ask thyself but this one question, O man, whatsoever thou art, ask it seriously; 'Might I this very hour go to heaven, am I willing and desirous to make a present change of this life for a better?' and tell me sincerely what answer thou receivest from thine own heart. Thy judgment cannot but tell thee, that the place is a thousand times better; that the condition would be infinitely advantageous to exchange baseness for glory, misery for blessedness, time for eternity, a living death for a life immortal. If thou do now fumble, and shuffle, and demur upon the resolution, be convinced of thine own worldliness and infidelity; and know, that if thy heart had as much of heaven as thy tongue, thou couldest not but say, with the chosen vessel, "I desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better."

XXVI. There is no earthly pleasure, whereof we shall not soon grow weary, and be as willing to intermit, as ever we were to entertain it; and if the use of it continue, the very frequency makes it disregarded; so as that, which at first we esteemed rare and precious, is now looked upon as common and despicable; and if it be such, as that our impetuous affection is too much transported with a present fruition, we are so much the more distempered in the

loss. On the contrary, those painful yokes, which at the first imposing seemed insupportable, grow tolerable by custom and long acquaintance: so that I know not how it comes to pass, that time hath a contrary power both to aggravate and lighten evils. Those pleasures are only worthy to carry our hearts, which are measured by no less than eternity; and those pains most justly formidable, which know neither end nor remission.

XXVII. The nearer our Saviour drew to his glory, the more humility he expressed. His followers were first his servants, and he their Master; John xiii. 16: then, his disciples, and he their Teacher; John xv. 8: soon after, they were his friends, and he theirs; John xv. 14: straightways after his resurrection and entrance into an immortal condition, they were his brethren; "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and your Father," John xx. 17: lastly, they are incorporated into him, and made partakers of his glory; "That they also may be one with us," saith he; "I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in one; and the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them," John xvii. 21, 22, 23. O Saviour, was this done for the depressing of thyself, or for the exaltation of us, or rather for both? How couldest thou more depress thyself, than thus to match thyself with us poor wretched creatures? How couldest thou more exalt us, than to raise us unto this entireness with thee, the all-glorious and eternal Son of God? How should we learn of thee, to improve our highest advancement to our deepest humility; and so to regard each other, that, when we are greatest, we should be least!

XXVIII. How apt are we to misconstrue the Spirit of God to our own disadvantage! While the blessed apostle bids us to work out our salvation "with fear and trembling," he doth not bid us to work it out with doubt and distrust. It is the psalmist's charge, that we should "serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice in him with trembling;" so that there is a fear without diffidence, and a trembling that may consist with joy. Trembling is an effect of fear; but this fear which we must affect, is reverential, not slavish, not distrustful. Indeed, when we look upon ourselves and consider our own frailties and corruptions and

God's infinite justice, we have too just cause of doubt and dejection, yea, were it not for better helps, of utter despair; but when we cast up our eyes to the power of him that hath undertaken for us, and the faithfulness of him that hath promised, and the sure mercies of him that hath begun his good work in us, we can fear with confidence, and rejoice in our trembling; for what are our sins to his mercies, our unworthiness to his infinite merits, our weaknesses to his omnipotence? I will therefore so distrust myself, that I will be stedfastly confident in the God of my salvation; I will so tremble before the glorious majesty of my God, that I may not abate of the joy of his never-failing mercy.

XXIX. What a large and open hand hath our God! How infinitely doth his bounty transcend, not the practice only, but the admiration of man! We think it well, if, upon often asking, we can receive small favours; if, after long delay, we can be gratified with a condescent; and if we have received one courtesy, that is a bar to a second: whereas our munificent God gives us, not only what we ask, but what we ask not, and therefore before we ask. Yea, it is he that gives us to ask; neither could we so much as crave good things, if he did not put into us those holy desires. Yea, he not only gives us blessings before we ask, but he gives us the best things, a right to eternal glory, before we are at all, yea, before the world was. And as he prevents us in time, so he exceeds our thoughts in measure, giving us more than we ask. Rachel would have a son; God gives her two: Abraham sues that Ishmael may live; God gives him to prosper, and to be the father of many princes. Yet more; he gives us what we cannot ask. The dumb Demoniac could not sue for himself: his very silence was vocal; and he receives what he would, and could not request. Yea, lastly, which is the great improvement of his mercy, he gives us against our asking. Our ignorance sues against ourselves, requiring hurtful things; he will not suffer our hearts and tongues to wrong us, but withholds what we unfitly crave, and gives us what we should, and do not crave: as the fond child cries to his father for a knife; he reaches him a spoon, that may feed and not hurt him. O the ocean of divine bounty, bound-

less, bottomless! O our wretched unworthiness, if we be either niggardly to ourselves in not asking blessings, or unthankful to our God in not acknowledging them!

XXX. Infidelity and faith look both through the same perspective glass, but at contrary ends. Infidelity looks through the wrong end of the glass, and therefore sees those objects which are near, afar off, and makes great things little; diminishing the greatest spiritual blessings, and removing far from us threatened evils. Faith looks at the right end, and brings the blessings that are far off in time, close to our eye; and multiplies God's mercies, which, in a distance, lost their greatness. Thus the faithful saw his seed possessed of the promised land, when as yet he had no seed, nor was likely to have any; when the seed which he should have, should not enjoy it till after four hundred years. Thus that good patriarch saw Christ's day, and rejoiced. Thus our first parent comforted himself after his ejection out of paradise, with the foresight of that blessed seed of the woman, which should be exhibited almost four thousand years after. Still and ever faith is like itself. What use were there of that grace, if it did not fetch home to my eye things future and invisible? That this dissolved body shall be raised out of the dust, and enlived with this very soul wherewith it is now animated, and both of them put into a condition eternally glorious, is as clearly represented to my soul in this glass, as if it were already done. "Faithful is he that hath promised; which will also do it."

XXXI. Who can think other than with scorn of that base and unworthy conceit, which hath been entertained by some, that our Saviour lived here on earth upon alms? He that vouchsafed to take upon him the shape of a servant, would have hated to take upon him the trade of a beggar. Service is a lawful calling; beggary, not so. He that gave life to all creatures, could take a maintenance from them without asking. He that did command the fish to bring the tribute money for himself and his disciples, and could multiply a few loaves and fishes for the relief of thousands, would rather raise a sustenance to himself and his, than beg it. But here was neither need nor cause. Even ordinary means failed not: many wealthy followers,

who had received cures and miraculous deliverances, besides heavenly doctrine, from him, ministered to him of their substance; Luke viii. 2, 3. Neither was this out of charity, but out of duty. In the charge which he gave to his disciples, when he sent them by pairs to preach abroad, he tells them the labourer is worthy of his wages; and can we think this rule doth not much more hold concerning himself? Had not himself and his family been furnished with a meet stock raised from hence, what purse was it which Judas bore? and how could he be a thief in his office, if his bags were empty? He therefore that could say, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," certainly would not choose, when it was in his power, rather to receive than give. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof;" and he distributes it, as he pleaseth, amongst the children of men. For me, I hope I shall have the grace to be content with whatsoever share shall fall to my lot; but my prayer shall be, that I may beg of none but God.

XXXII. What a madness it is in us, to presume on our interest in God's favour, for the securing of our sinfulness from judgment! The angels were deeper in it, than we mortals can ever hope to be in these houses of clay, yet long since are ugly devils; and they who enjoyed the liberty of the glorious heavens, are now reserved in everlasting chains of darkness. And if we look down upon earth, what darling had God in the world, but Israel? This was his firstborn, his lot, his inheritance, of whom he said, "Here I have a delight to dwell." And now where is it? O the woeful desolations of that select people! What is it to tell of the suffossion of her vineyards? Psalm lxxx, 13: vastation of her tents? Jer. iv. 20: the devouring of her land? Isaiah i. 7: demolition of walls? Psalm lxxxix. 40: breaking down altars? Isaiah xxvii. 9: burning of cities; spoiling of houses; dashing in pieces their children; ravishing their wives? Isaiah xiii. 16: killing of their priests? Psalm lxxviii. 64: eating of their own children of but a span long? Lam. ii. 20: and a thousand such woeful symptoms of war? the psalmist hath said a word for all, in a just, but contrary sense, "Destructions are come to a perpetual end." What destruction can be

more, when there is no Israel? How is that wretched nation vanished, no man knows whither! So as it was Jezebel's curse, that nothing was left whereof it could be said, "This was Jezebel," so there is not one piece of a man left in all the world, of whom we can say, 'This was of one of the tribes of Israel.' As for those famous churches which were, since that, honoured with the preaching and pens of the blessed apostles, where are they now to be looked for, but amongst the rubbish of our cursed Mahometism? O that we could not be high-minded, but fear!

XXXIII. What a woeful conversion is here! The sting of death is sin, and the sting of sin is death: both meet in man to make him perfectly miserable. Death could not have stung us, no, could not have been at all, if it had not been for sin; and sin, though in itself extremely heinous, yet were not so dreadful and horrible, if it were not attended with death. How do we owe ourselves to the mercy of a Saviour, that hath freed us from the evil of both! having pulled out the sting of death, which is sin, that it cannot hurt us: and having taken such order with the sting of sin, which is death, that, instead of hurting, it shall turn beneficial to us. Lord, into what a safe condition hast thou put us! If neither sin nor death can hurt us, what should we fear?

XXXIV. How unjustly hath the presumption of blasphemous cavillers been wont to cast the envy of their condemnation merely upon the absolute will of an unrespective power! as if the damnation of the creature were only of a supreme will, not of a just merit. The very name of justice convinces them. A punitive justice cannot but suppose an offence. It is not for us to rack the brains and strain the heart-strings of plain honest Christians with the subtleties of distinctions, of a negative and positive reprobation, of causes and consequences; truths meet for the schools: it is enough that all Christian divines, the synods both of Dort and Trent, agree in this truth, that never man is, was, can be miserable, but for sin; yea, for his own sin. The prophet tells us so in terms; "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" Lam. iii. 39. Nothing can be more true, than that of Bildad the Shuhite, "Behold, God will not cast

away a perfect man," Job. viii. 20. Thy perdition is of thyself, O Israel. It is no less than rank blasphemy, to make God the author of sin. "Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness; neither shall evil dwell with thee," saith the psalmist, Psalm v. 4. Our sin is our own; and the wages of sin is death. He that doth the work, earns the wages. So then the righteous God is cleared both of our sin and our death. His justice pays us only what we will needs deserve. "Have I any pleasure at all," saith he, "that the wicked should die; and not that he should return from his ways and live? Wherefore return ye, and live," Ezek. xviii. 23, 32. What a wretched thing is a wilful sinner, that will needs be guilty of his own death! Nothing is more odious amongst men, than for a man to be a felon of himself: besides the forfeiture of his estate, Christian burial is denied him, and he is cast forth into the highway, with a stake pitched through his body; so as every passenger that sees that woeful monument, is ready to say, 'There lies the carcase, but where is the soul?' But so much more heinous is the self-felony of a wilful sinner, because it is immediately acted upon the soul, and carries him with pleasure in the ways of an eternal death. O Lord, "cleanse thou me from my secret faults: keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins, lest they get the dominion over me," Psalm xix. 12, 13.

XXXV. We are wont to say, that we ought to give even the devil his due: and surely it is possible for us to wrong that malignant spirit, in casting upon him those evils which are not properly his. It is true that he is the tempter, and both injects evil motions, and draws them forth into act; but yet all ill is not immediately his; we have enough besides of our own. "Every man," saith St. James, "is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed; then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death," James i. 14, 15. Lo, both the lust and the seducement are our own: the sin is ours; the death, ours. There are indeed diabolical suggestions, which are immediately cast into us by that wicked one; but there are carnal temptations that are raised out of our own corrupt nature: these need not his immediate hand. He was the main agent in

our depravation, but, being once depraved, we can act evil of ourselves. And if Satan be the father of sin, our will is the mother; and sin is the cursed issue of both. He could not make our sin without ourselves; we concur to our own undoing. It was the charge of the apostle, that we should not "give place to the devil:" lo, he could not take it, unless we gave it: our will betrays us to his tyranny. In vain shall we cry out of the malice and fraud of wicked spirits, while we nourish their accomplices in our bosoms.

XXXVI. I cannot but think with what unspeakable joy old Simeon died, when, after long waiting for the consolation of Israel, he had now seen the Lord's Christ; when I hear him say, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Methinks I should see his soul ready to fly out of his mouth in a heavenly ravishment, and even then upon its wing towards its glory; for now his eyes saw, and his arms embraced, in God's salvation his own, in Israel's glory his own. How gladly doth he now see death, when he hath the Lord of life in his bosom! Or how can he wish to close up his eyes with any other object? Yet when I have seriously considered it, I cannot see wherein our condition comes short of his. He saw the child Jesus but in his swathing bands, when he was but now entering upon the great work of our redemption; we see him, after the full accomplishment of it, gloriously triumphing in heaven. He saw him but buckling on his armour, and entering into the lists; we see him victorious. "Who is this that cometh from Edom; with died garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?" Isaiah lxiii. 1. He could only say, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given," Isaiah ix. 6; we can say, "Thou hast ascended on high; thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men," Psalm lxviii. 18. It is true the difference is, he saw his Saviour with bodily eyes; we, with mental; but the eyes of our faith are no less sure and unfailing, than those of sense. Lord, why should not I, whose eyes have no less seen thy salvation, say, "Now

let thy servant depart, not in peace only, but in a joyful sense of my instant glory?"

XXXVII. When I think on my Saviour in his agony and on his cross, my soul is so clouded with sorrow, as if it would never be clear again. Those bloody drops and those dreadful ejaculations, methinks, should be past all reach of comfort. But when I see his happy eluctation out of these pangs, and hear him cheerfully rendering his spirit into the hands of his Father; when I find him trampling upon his grave, attended with glorious angels, and ascending in the chariot of a cloud to his heaven; I am so elevated with joy, that I seem to have forgotten there was ever any cause of grief in those sufferings. I could be passionate to think, O Saviour, of thy bitter and ignominious death, and, most of all, of thy vehement strugglings with thy Father's wrath for my sake; but thy conquest and glory take me off, and calls me to hallelujahs of joy and triumph. "Blessing and honour, glory and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever," Rev. v. 13.

XXXVIII. It is not hard to observe, that the more holy any person is, the more he is afflicted with others' sin. Lot vexed his righteous soul with the unclean conversation of the Sodomites; David's eyes gushed out rivers of water, because men kept not the law. Those who can look with dry and undispleased eyes upon another's sin, never truly mourned for their own. Had they abhorred sin, as sin, the offence of a God would have been grievous to them, in whomsoever. It is a godless heart, that doth not find itself concerned in God's quarrel, and that can laugh at that which the God of heaven frowns at. My soul is nearest to me; my sorrow therefore for my sin must begin at home; but it may not rest there: from thence it shall diffuse itself all the world over. "Who is offended and I burn not?" Who offendeth, and I weep not?

XXXIX. The world little considers the good advantage that is made of sins. Surely the whole church of God hath reason to bless God for Thomas's unbelief; not in the act, which was odious after so good assurances; but in the issue. His doubt proves our evidence; and his con-

fession, after his touch had convinced him, was more noble than his incredulity was shameful. All his attendance upon Christ had not taught him so much divinity, as this one touch. Often had he said "My Lord;" but never "My God," till now. Even Peter's confession, though rewarded with the change of his name, came short of this. The flame that is beaten down by the blast of the bellows, rises higher than otherwise it would; and the spring-water that runs level in the plain, yet if it fall low, it will therefore rise high: the shaken tree roots the deeper. Not that we should "sin, that grace may abound; God forbid:" he can never hope to be good, that will be therefore ill, that he may be the better: but that our holy zeal should labour to improve our miscarriages to our spiritual gain, and the greater glory of that Majesty whom we have offended. To be bettered by grace is no mastery; but to raise more holiness out of sin, is a noble imitation of that holy God, who brings light out of darkness, life out of death.

XL. Every man best knows his own complaints. We look upon the outsides of many whom we think happy, who, in the mean time, are secretly wrung with the inward sense of their own concealed sorrows; and, under a smooth and calm countenance, smother many a tempest in their bosom. There are those whose faces smile while their conscience gripes them closely within. There are those that can dissemble their poverty and domestic vexations, reserving their sighs till their back be turned; that can pick their teeth abroad, when they are fasting and hungry at home: but many a one forces a song, when his heart is heavy. No doubt Naomi made many a short meal, after her return to Bethlehem, yet did not whine to her great kindred in a bemoaning of her want: and good Hannah bit in many a grief which her insulting rival might not see. On the contrary, there are many whom we pity as miserable, that laugh in their sleeve, and applaud themselves in their secret felicity, and would be very loth to exchange conditions with those that commiserate them. A ragged cynic likes himself, at least as well as a great Alexander. The mortified Christian that knows both worlds, looks with a kind of contented scorn upon the proud gallant that contemns him, as feeling that heaven within him, which

the other is not capable to believe. It is no judging of men's real estate by their semblance, nor valuing others' worth by our own rate. And, as for ourselves, if we have once laid sure grounds of our own inward contentment and happiness, it matters not greatly, if we be misknown of the world.

XLI. For one man to give titles to another, is ordinary ; but for the great God to give titles to a poor wretched man, is no less than wonderful. Thus doth the Lord to Job ; " There is none like him in the earth, a perfect and upright man." O what must he needs be, in whom his Maker glories ! Lo, who would have looked for a saint in so obscure a corner of the east ; and in so dark a time, before ever the law gave light to the world ? Yet even then, the land of Uz yields a Job. No time, no place can be any bar to an infinite mercy. Even this while, for ought I see, the sun shined more bright in Midian, than in Goshen. God's election will be sure to find out his own any where out of hell ; and if they could be there, even there also. Amongst all those idolatrous heathen, Job is perfect and upright ; his religion and integrity are so much the more glorious, because they are so ill-neighbour'd ; as some rich diamond is set off by a dark foil. O the infinite goodness of the Almighty, that picks out some few grains out of the large chaff-heap of the world, which he reserves for the granary of a blessed immortality ! " It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth ; but of God that sheweth mercy." We might well imagine, that such a sprig must sprout out of the stock of faithful Abraham. What other loins were likely to yield so holy an issue ? And if his Sarah must be the mother of the promised seed, yet why might he not also raise a blessed seed from Keturah ? The birth doth not always follow the belly : even this second brood yields an heir of his father's faith. It is said, that " to the sons of the concubines Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away to the east," Gen. xxv. 6. Surely this son of the concubine carries away as rich a legacy of his father's grace, as ever was enjoyed by the son of the promise at home. The gifts that Abraham gave to Midian, were nothing to those gifts which the God of Abraham gives to the son of Midian, who was " perfect and upright,

one that feared God and eschewed evil." I perceive the holy and wise God meant to make this man a pattern, as of patience, so of all heavenly virtues. He could not be fit for that use, if he were not exquisite ; and what can be wanting to that man, of whom God holily boasts that he is perfect ? And now what metal is so fit to challenge the fire of affliction, as this pure gold ? and who is so fit a match for the great adversary, as this champion of God ? Never had he been put upon so hard a combat, if God had not well known both the strength that he had given him, and the happy success of his conflict. Little doth that good man know what wager is laid on his head, but strongly encounters all his trials. The Sabeans have bereft him of his oxen ; the Chaldees, of his camels ; the fire from heaven, of his sheep ; the tempest, of his children ; Satan, of his health ; and had not his wife been left to him for his greatest cross, and his friends for his further tormentors, I doubt whether they had escaped. Lo, there sits the great potentate of the east, naked and forlorn in the ashes ; as destitute of all comforts, as full of painful boils and botches ; scraping his loathsome hide with a potsherd ; yet, even in that woeful posture, possessing his soul in patience, maintaining his innocence, justifying his Maker, cheering himself in his Redeemer, and happily triumphing over all his miseries, and at last made the great mirror of divine bounty to all generations. Now must Job pray for his friendly persecutors, and is so high in favour with God, that it is made an argument of extreme wrath against Israel, that though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in the land, they should deliver none but their own souls ; Ezek. xiv. 14, 20. O God, this saint could not have had this strength of invincible patience without thee : thou that rewardest it in him, didst bestow it upon him. It is thy great mercy to crown thine own works in us. Thy gifts are free. Thou canst fortify even my weak soul with the same powers : strengthen me with the same grace, and impose what thou wilt.

XLII. As it shall be once in glory, so it is in grace—there are degrees of it. The apostle, that said of his auditors, " They have received the Holy Ghost as well as we," did not say, They have received the Holy Ghost as

much as we. We know the apostles had so much, as to give it to others; none, besides them, could do so. It is a happy thing to have any quantity of true sanctifying grace at all: every drop of water is water, and every grain of gold is gold; every measure of grace is precious. But who is there, that, when he is dry, would take up with one drop of liquor, when he might have more? or if covetously minded, would sit down content with one dram of gold? In such cases, a little doth but draw on a desire of more. It is strange to see that in all other commodities, we desire a fulness: if God give us fruit of our bodies, it contents us not to have an imperfect child, but we wish it may have the full shape and proportion; and when God hath answered us in that, we do not rest in the integrity of parts, but desire that it may attain to a fulness of understanding and stature, and then lastly to a fulness of age: we would have full dishes, full cups, full coffers, full barns, a fulness of all things, save the best of all, which is the Holy Ghost. Any measure of spiritual grace contents us, so as we are ready to say with Esau, "I have enough, my brother." There is a sinful kind of contentment wherewith many fashionable Christians suffer themselves to be beguiled to the utter undoing of their souls; for hereupon they grow utterly careless to get what they think they have already: who cares to eat, that is full crammed? And by this means they live and die graceless; for had they ever tasted how sweet the Lord is in the graces of his Holy Spirit, they could never think they had enough; and while they do think so, they are utterly incapable of either having or desiring more. As there is a sinful, so there is a holy covetousness; which, the more it hath, the more it affects. Lord, make me thus covetous, and I cannot choose but be rich.

XLIII. What a marvellous familiarity was this which Moses had with God, that "the Lord spake unto Moses, face to face, as a man speaking unto his friend!" and, yet more, that Moses so spake to God! What a bold and high request was that which Moses made to God; "I beseech thee shew me thy glory;" that is, as it is there interpreted, "thy face;" that face which no man might see and live. Lo, God hath immediately before spoken

to Moses, even to his face, out of the cloudy pillar : that doth not satisfy his holily ambitious soul, but as he heard the voice, so he must see the face of the Almighty. That cloudy pillar did sufficiently represent unto him the presence of the great God of Israel ; yet still he sues for a sight of his glory. This is no pattern for flesh and blood : far be it from our thoughts to aspire so high. “ Thy face, O God, will we seek,” but, in thy blessed ordinances, not in thy glorious and incomprehensible essence. It is not for me as yet to presume so far, as to desire to see that infinite light which thou art, or that light wherewith thou art clothed, or that light inaccessible wherein thou dwellest : only now shew me the light of thy countenance in grace, and prepare my soul for that light of glory, when I shall see as I am seen.

XLIV. In the waters of life, the divine scriptures, there are shallows and there are deeps ; shallows where the lamb may wade, and deeps where the elephant may swim. If we be not wise to distinguish, we may easily miscarry : he that can wade over the ford, cannot swim through the deep ; and if he mistake the passage, he drowns. What infinite mischief hath arisen to the church of God from the presumption of ignorant and unlettered men, that have taken upon them to interpret the most obscure Scriptures, and pertinaciously defended their own sense ! How contrary is this to practice in whatsoever vocation ! In the tailor’s trade, every man can stitch a seam, but every man cannot cut out a garment ; in the sailor’s art, every one may be able to pull at a cable, but every one cannot guide the helm ; in the physician’s profession, every gossip can give some ordinary receipts upon common experience, but to find the nature of the disease, and to prescribe proper remedies from the just grounds of art, is proper to the professors of that science, and we think it absurd and dangerous, to allow every ignorant mountebank to practise ; in matter of law, every plain countryman knows what belongs to distraining, impounding, replevyng, but to give sound counsel to a client in a point of difficulty, to draw firm conveyances, to plead effectually, and to give sound judgment in the hardest cases, is for none but barristers and benchers : and shall we think

it safe, that in divinity which is the mistress of all sciences, and in matters which may concern the eternal safety of the soul, every man should take upon him to shape his own coat, to steer his own way, to give his own dose, to put and adjudge his own case? The old word was, that artists are worthy to be trusted in their own trade. Wherefore hath God given to men skill in arts and tongues? Wherefore do the aptest wits spend their times and studies from their infancy upon these sacred employments, if men altogether inexpert in all the grounds both of art and language, can be able to pass as sound a judgment in the depths of theological truths as they? How happy were it, if we could all learn, according to that word of the apostle, to keep ourselves within our own line! As Christians, the scriptures are ours; but to use, to enjoy, to read, to hear, to learn, to meditate, to practise; not to interpret according to our private conceit: for this faculty we must look higher; "The priest's lips are to preserve knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts," Mal. ii. 7.

XLV. When we see the year in its prime and pride, decked with beautiful blossoms and all goodly varieties of flowers, cheered with the music of birds, and stated in a sweet and moderate temper of heat and cold; how glad we are that we have made so good an exchange for a hard and chilling winter; and how ready we could be to wish that this pleasant and happy season might last all the year long! But herein were our desires satisfied, we should wish to our own great disadvantage; for if the spring were not followed with an intension of summer's heat, those fruits whose hopes we see in the bud and flower, could never come to any perfection; and even that succeeding fervour, if it should continue long, would be no less prejudicial to the health and life of all creatures; and if there were not a relaxation of that vigorous heat in autumn, so as the sap returns back into the root, we could never look to see but one year's fruit. And thus also it is spiritually. If our prosperity were not intermixed with vicissitudes of crosses, and if the lively beams of grace were not sometimes interchanged with cold desertions, we

should never know what belongs to spiritual life. What should we do then, but be both patient of and thankful for our changes ; and make no account of any constancy, till we attain to the region of rest and blessedness ?

XLVI. What fools doth the devil make of those men who would fain otherwise be accounted wise ! Who would think that men could be so far forsaken of their reason, as to fall down before those stocks and stones which their own hands had carved ? to guide their enterprises by the fond auguries of the flying, or posture, or noise of fowls, or the inspection of the entrails of beasts ? to tie the confidence of their success to certain scrawls and characters which themselves have devised ? to read their own or others' fortunes in their hands or stars ? to suffer themselves to be mocked with deceitful visions ? Neither are his spiritual delusions less gross and palpable. Wise Solomon speaks of " the wickedness of folly ;" and we may no less truly invert it, the folly of wickedness : " The foolish man," saith our Saviour, " builds his house upon the sand ;" so as it may be washed away with the next waves : what other doth the foolish worldling, that builds all his hopes upon " uncertain riches," momentary pleasures, deceitful favours ? " The fool," saith Solomon, " walketh in darkness ;" the sinner walks in the darkness of ignorance, through the works of darkness, to the pit of darkness. " The fool," saith the preacher, " knows not the way into the city ;" the worldling may perhaps hit the way through the golden gates of honour, or down to the mines of wealth, or to the flowery garden of pleasure ; but the way of true peace he knows not : he no more knows the way to heaven, than if there were none. " The fool," saith the psalmist, " hath said in his heart, There is no God : " did not the wicked man say so, he durst not wilfully sin in the face of so mighty and dreadful an avenger. Lastly, the fool is apt to part with his patrimony for some gay toys ; and how ready is the carnal heart to cast away the favour of God, the inheritance of heaven, the salvation of his soul, for these vain earthly trifles ! Holy men are wont to pass with the world for God's fools : alas, how little do these censurers know how to pass a true judgment of wisdom and folly ! He that was

rapt into the third heaven, tells us, that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men," 1 Cor. i. 25; but this we are sure of, that wicked men are the devil's fools; and that "judgments are prepared for scorers, and stripes for the back of fools."

XLVII. There are some things which are laudable in man, but cannot be incident into God, as a bashful shamefacedness and holy fear; and there are some dispositions blame-worthy in men, which are yet, in a right sense, holily ascribed unto God, as unchangeableness and repentance. Attributes and qualities receive their limitations according to their meet subjects to which they belong; with this sure rule, that whatsoever may import an infinite purity and perfection, we have reason to ascribe to our Maker; what may argue infirmity, misery, corruption, we have reason to take to ourselves. Neither is it otherwise in the condition of men. One man's virtue is another's vice; so boldness in a woman, bashfulness in an old man, bounty in a poor man, parsimony in the great, are as foully unbeseeming, as boldness in a soldier, bashfulness in a child, bounty in the rich, parsimony in the poor, are justly commendable. It is not enough for us to know what is good in itself, but what is proper for us; else we may be blemished with that which is another's honour.

XLVIII. It is easy to observe that there are five degrees of the digestion of our spiritual food; first, it is received into the cell of the ear, and there digested by a careful attention; then it is conveyed into the brain, and there concocted by due meditation; from thence it is sent down into the heart, and there digested by the affections; and, from thence it is conveyed to the tongue in conference and holy confession; and, lastly, it is thence transmitted to the hand, and there receives perfect digestion in our action and performance. And as the life and health of the body cannot be maintained, except the material food pass through all the degrees of bodily concoction, no more can the soul live and prosper in the want of any of these spiritual degrees of digestion: and as where the food is perfectly concocted, the body grows fat and vigor-

ous, so it is with the soul, where the spiritual repast is thus kindly digested. Were there not failings in all these degrees, the souls of men would not be so meagre and unthriving as they are. Some there are, that will not give so much as ear-room to the word of truth : such are willing recusants. Others will admit it perhaps so far, but there let it rest : these are fashionable auditors. Some others can be content to let it enter into the brain, and take up some place in their thoughts and memories : these are speculative professors. Some, but fewer, others let it down into their hearts, and there entertain it with secret liking, but hide it in their bosoms, not daring to make profession of it to the world : these are close Nicodemians. Others take it into their mouths and busy their tongues in holy chat, yet do nothing : these are formal discourses. But, alas, how few are there, whose hands speak louder than their tongues ; that conscionably hear, meditate, affect, speak, do the word of their Maker and Redeemer !

XLIX. Men that are in the same condition, speed not always alike. Barabbas was a thief, murderer, seditious, and deserved hanging no less than the two thieves, that were crucified with our Saviour ; yet he is dismissed, and they executed. And even of these two, as our Saviour said of the two women grinding at the mill, one was taken, the other refused : one went, before Peter, to paradise ; the other went, before Judas, into hell. The providence and election of a God may make a difference. We have no reason, in the same crime, to presume upon a contrary issue. If that gracious hand shall exempt us from the common judgment of our consorts in evil, we have cause to bless his mercy ; but if his just hand shall sweep us away in the company of our wicked consociates, we have reason to thank none but ourselves for our sufferings.

L. How sweet a thing is revenge to us naturally ! Even the very infant rejoices to see him beaten, that hath angered him ; and is ready, with his little hand, to give that stroke to the by-stander, which he would have with more force returned to the offender : and how many have we known, in mortal quarrels, cheerfully bleeding out their last drop, when they have seen their enemy gasping and

dying before them ! This alone shews how much there is remaining in our bosom of the sting of that old serpent, who was a murderer from the beginning, delighting in death, and enjoying our torment : whereas, on the contrary, true grace is merciful, ready to forgive, apt to return good for evil, to pray for our persecutors. Nothing doth more clearly evince what spirit we are of, than our disposition in wrongs received. The carnal heart breathes nothing but revenge, and is straight wringing the sword out of the hands of him that hath said, " Vengeance is mine." The regenerate soul, contrarily, gives place to wrath, and puts on " bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing, forgiving ; and will not be overcome with evil, but overcomes evil with good." We have so much of God, as we can remit injuries ; so much of Satan, as we would revenge them.

LI. It is worth observing how nature hath taught all living creatures to be their own physicians ; the same power that gave them a being, hath led them to the means of their own preservation. No Indian is so savage, but that he knows the use of his tobacco and contra-yerva. Yea, even the brute creatures are bred with this skill. The dog, when he is stomach-sick, can go right to his proper grass ; the cat, to her nep ; the goat, to his hemlock ; the weasel, to rue ; the hart, to ditany ; the sick lion can cure himself with an ape ; the monkey with a spider ; the bear with an ant-heap. To what purpose should we instance, when the case is universal ? The toad hath recourse to his plantain-leaf ; the tortoise, to his pennyroyal ; and, in short, there is none but knows his own medicine. As for the reasonable creature, in all the civilized regions of the world, we may well say now of every nation as it was of old said of Egypt, that it is ' a country of physicians.' There is not a house-wife, but hath an apothecary's shop in her garden, which affords her those receipts, whereby she heals the ails of her complaining family. Only mankind is mortally soul-sick, and naturally neither knows, nor seeks, nor cares for a remedy. O thou that art the great Physician in heaven, first cure our insensibleness ; make thou us as sick of our sins, as we have made ourselves sick by sin ; and then speak the word, and we shall be whole.

LII. When I consider the precious ornaments of the high-priest, the rich fabric and furniture of the tabernacle, the bountiful gifts which the princes of the tribes offered at the dedication of the altar; Num. viii; I cannot but think what a mass of wealth Israel brought with them out of Egypt. These treasures grew not in the wilderness, neither did Jacob and his sons bring them out of Canaan: they were gathered in their Goshen. It was a hard bondage under which Israel was held by the latter Pharaohs; yet as if then, instead of the furnaces of bricks, they had been labouring in the silver mines to their own advantage, they come out laden with precious metals. What should I say to this? God said, "Israel is my firstborn;" and the firstborn was to have a double portion. What was Israel, but a type of God's church? Now the church of God may be held down with cruel tyranny; but, in spite of all opposition, it will thrive. And "though they have lien among the pots, yet shall they be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold," Psalm lxxviii. 13. And if the spouse of Christ shall be stripped of her outward ornaments, yet, "the King's daughter is all glorious within;" rich in those heavenly endowments of grace and holiness, which shall make her dear and lovely in the eyes of her celestial Bridegroom. Shortly, the church may be impaired in her external estate, but if the while she gathers so much the more of those better treasures, what hath she lost? "Godliness, with contentment, is great gain." If she have less of the world and more of God, what cause can she have of complaint, or her enemies of insultation?

LIII. He that is a God of order, loves both to set and keep it. For the service of his sanctuary, he appointed several offices; and, in those offices, several degrees. None of those might interfere with others. The Levites might not meddle with the priest's charge; nor one degree of Levites with another. The porters might not thrust in among the singers, though perhaps some of their voices might be more tunable; neither might the singers change places with the porters. The sons of Merari, that were to carry the boards, bars, and pillars of the tabernacle and the court, might not change with the sons of Gershon, for

the lighter burden of the curtains and hangings, Num. iv. 21, 33; nor those of Gershon, for the more holy load of the vessels of the sanctuary committed to the sons of Kohath, Num. iv. 15; neither might the sons of Kohath so much as go in to see the covering of those sacred utensils by Aaron and his sons, upon no less pain than death, Num. iv. 20. So punctual was God in setting every man his proper station, and holding him to it without either neglect or change. And why should we think God less curious in his evangelical church? It was the charge of him who, next under the Almighty, had the marshalling of the church of the Gentiles, "Let every man abide in the same calling, wherein he was called," 1 Cor. vii. 20. Perhaps there may be a better head for policy upon plebeian shoulders, than the governor's: shall that man leave his rank, and thrust into the chair of government? Neither is it other in spiritual offices. It is no thinking, that the wise and holy God will be pleased with a well-meant confusion. For all our employments in the service of the Almighty, we must consult, not with our abilities, but with our vocation.

LIV. I see too many men willing to live to no purpose; caring only to be rid of time, on what terms soever; making it the only scope of their life, to live; a disposition, that may well befit brute creatures which are not capable of any other aim, save merely their own preservation; but for men that enjoy the privilege of reason, for Christians that pretend a title to religion, too base and unworthy. Where God hath bestowed these higher faculties, he looks for other improvements; for what a poor thing is it only to live! a thing common to us, with the most despised vermin that breeds on our own corruption! but to live for some more excellent ends, is that which reason suggests and religion perfects. Here then are divers subordinations of ends, whereof one makes way for another, and all for the supreme. We labour and exercise, that we may eat; we eat, that we may live, and maintain health and strength: we desire health and strength, that we may do good to ourselves and many, that we may be able to do service to God, king, and country; and therein we drive at the testimony of a good conscience, approving to God our holy desires and endeavours; and, in all these, at the

glory and salvation of our souls; and, lastly, in that, as the highest of all ends, at the glory of our blessed Creator and Redeemer. This is indeed to live. Otherwise, we may have a being for a time upon earth, but a life I cannot call it; and, when we must cease to be, we are necessarily swallowed up with the horror of either not being at all, or of being eternally miserable.

LV. All our love is moved from some good which we apprehend in the party loved; carnal love, from beauty; worldly, from gain; spiritual, from grace; divine, from infinite goodness. It must needs be therefore, that when the ground and motive of our love faileth, the affection itself must cease. Those that are enamoured of a beautiful face, find their passion cooled with a loathsome deformity; those that are led by the hopes of profit, like wasps, leave buzzing about the gally-pot, when all the honey is gone; those that could carry the rod familiarly in their hand, run from it, when they see it turned to a serpent. Contrarily, when that which attracts our love, is constant to itself and everlasting, the affection set upon it is permanent and eternal. If then I love God for riches, for preferment, for my own indemnity, when intervening crosses strip me of the hopes of all these, I shall be ready to say, with that distempered king of Israel, "Behold, this evil is of the Lord: what, should I wait for the Lord any longer?" 2 Kings vi. 33. If my respects to my Saviour be for the loaves and fishes, my heart is carried away with those baskets of fragments; but if I can love God for his goodness' sake, this love shall out-last time and overmatch death.

LVI. What a wretched narrowness of heart is this which I find in myself; that when I may have all things, I take up with nothing; and when I may be possessed of an infinite good, I please myself in grasping a little thick clay! It was a large word that the apostle said to his Corinthians; "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours," 1 Cor. iii. 22. What, shall we think they were richer than their neighbours? Or is not this the condition of all those, of whom he can say in the next words, "Ye are Christ's?" There, there comes in all our

right to this infinite wealth; of ourselves, we are beggars; in him who is Lord of all, we are feoffed in all things; for while he saith, "All are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's;" he doth in effect say, "Christ is yours; and, in him, God is yours;" for this right is mutual. How else should all things be ours, if God were not ours, without whom all is nothing? and how should God the Father be ours, without that Son of his love, who hath said, "All things that the Father hath, are mine," John xvi. 15; "Thou, O Father, art in me, and I in thee," John xvii. 21; "No man cometh to the Father, but by me," John xiv. 6? If then Christ be mine, all is mine. And if I have so oft received him, and so often renewed my union with him, how is he but mine? O Saviour, let me feel myself thoroughly possess of thee, whether the world slide or sink, I am happy.

LVII. God will not vouchsafe to allow so much honour to wicked instruments, as to make them the means of removing public evils. The magicians of Egypt could have power to bring some plagues upon the land, but had not the power to take them away. Certainly there needed a greater power to give a being to the frogs, than to call them off; yet this latter they cannot do, who prevailed in the first. Moses and Aaron must be called, to fetch off that judgment which the sorcerers have brought upon themselves. Neither is it otherwise still. Wicked men can draw down those plagues upon a nation, which only the faithful must remove: the sins of the one make work for the others' intercession. Do we therefore smart and groan under heavy calamities? We know to whom we are beholden. "Thus saith the Lord unto this people, Thus have they loved to wander: they have not refrained their feet; therefore the Lord doth not accept them; he will now remember their iniquity, and visit their sins. When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and an oblation, I will not accept them: but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence," Jer. xiv. 10, 12. Do we desire to be freed from the present evils, and to escape an utter desolation? They are Moses and Aaron, that must do it: "He said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his

chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them," Psalm cvi. 23. When our quarrel is with heaven, it is not our force or our policy, that can save us. Every faithful man is a favourite of the King of glory; and can do more, than command legions. Then is a people in some good way towards safety, when they have learned to know their friends. While we have good men's prayers to grapple with wicked men's sins, there may be hopes of recovery.

LVIII. The aiming at a good end can be no just excuse for an unlawful act or disposition; but if contentment did consist in having much, it were a sore temptation to a man to be covetous; since that contentation is the thing, wherein the heart of man is wont to place its chief felicity; neither indeed can there be any possible happiness without it. But the truth is, abundance is no whit guilty so much as of ease, much less, of a full joy. How many have we known, that have spent more pleased and happy hours under a house of sticks, and walls of mud, and roof of straw, than great potentates have done under marbles and cedar! And how many, both wise heathen and mortified Christians, have rid their hands of their cumbersome store, that they might be capable of being happy! Other creatures do naturally neglect that which abused reason bids us dote upon. If we had no better powers than beasts or fowls, we should not at all care for this either white or red earth; and, if our graces were as great as the least of saints, we should look carelessly upon the preciouslest and largest treasures that the earth can afford. Now our debauched reason, instead of stirring us up to emulate the best creatures, draws us down below the basest of them, moving us to place our happiness in those things which have neither life nor true worth; much less, can give that which they have not. It is not for the generous souls of Christians to look so low, as to place their contentment in any thing, whether within the bowels or upon the face of this earth; but to raise their thoughts up to the glorious region of their original and rest; "looking not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal," 2 Cor. iv. 18.

LIX. The holy psalmist knew well what he said, when he called the thunder in the clouds, "The voice of the Lord;" a voice "powerful" and "full of majesty," Psalm xxix. 4. The very heathens made this the most awful act of their Jupiter; which the Spirit of God expresses in a more divine language; "The God of glory thundereth." Upon this dreadful sound it is, that the psalmist calls to the "mighty ones" to "give unto the Lord glory and strength," to "give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name;" as it were, advising the great commanders of the world, when they hear it thunder, to fall down on their knees, and to lift up their hands and eyes to that great God that speaks to them from heaven. No man needs to bid the stoutest heart to fear, when this terrible sound strikes through his ear, which is able to drive even Neros and Caligulas into bench-holes: but this mighty voice calls for an improvement of our fear to the glory of that Almighty power whence it proceeds. Perhaps the presumption of man will be finding out the natural causes of this fearful uproar in the clouds; but the working by means derogates nothing from the God of nature. Neither yet are all thunders natural. That whirlwind and thunder, wherein God spake to Job, Job xl. 9. xxxviii. 1; that thunder and lightning, wherein God spake to Moses and Israel in mount Sinai, Exod. xix; that thunder and rain, wherewith God answered the prayer of Samuel in wheat-harvest, for Israel's conviction in the unseasonable suit for their king, 1 Sam. xii. 17, 18; that thundering voice from heaven, that answered the prayer of the Son of God, for the glorifying of his name, John xii. 28, 29; the seven thunders, that uttered their voices to the beloved disciple in Patmos, Rev. x. 3, 4;—had nothing of ordinary nature in them. And how many have we heard and read of, that, for slighting of this great work of God, have at once heard his voice and felt his stroke! Shortly, if any heart can be unmoved at this mighty voice of God, it is stiffer than the rocks in the wilderness; for "the voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness, the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh." For me, I tremble at the power, while I adore the mercy of that great God that speaks so loudly to me. It is my comfort that he is my Father, who ap-

proves himself thus omnipotent. His love is no less infinite, than his power. Let the terror be to them that know him angry; let my confidence overcome my fear. "It is the Lord; let him do whatsoever he will." All is not right with me, till I have attained to tremble at him while he shineth, and to rejoice in him while he thundereth.

LX. We talk of mighty warriors who have done great exploits in conquering kingdoms; but the Spirit of God tells us of a greater conquest, than all theirs; "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith," 1 John v. 4. Alas! the conquest of those great commanders was but poor and partial, of some small spots of the earth; the conquest of a regenerate Christian is universal, of the whole world. Those other conquerors, while they prevailed abroad, were yet overcome at home: and while they were the lords of nations, were no other than vassals to their own lusts: these begin their victories at home, and enlarge their triumphs over all their spiritual enemies. The glory of those other victors was laid down with their bodies in the dust; the glory that attends these, is eternal. What pity it is, that the true Christian should not know his own greatness; that he may raise his thoughts accordingly, and bear himself as one that tramples the world under His feet! "For all that is in the world," is "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life:" these he hath truly subdued in himself, not so as to bereave them of life, but of rule. If he have left them some kind of being still in him, yet he hath left them no dominion; and therefore may well style himself the lord of the world. Far, far therefore be it from him, that he should so abject and debase himself, as to be a slave to his vassals. None but holy and high thoughts and demeanors may now besee him; and in these spiritual regards of his inward greatness and self conquests, his word must be, 'Either Cæsar or nothing.'

LXI. I see so many kinds of phrensies in the world, and so many seemingly wise brains taken with them, that I much doubt whom I may be sure to account free from either the touch, or at least the danger of this indisposition. How many opinions do I see raised every day, that argue

no less than a mere spiritual madness ; such as if they should have been but mentioned seven years ago, would have been questioned out of what bedlam they had broken loose ! And as for dispositions, how do we see one so ragingly furious, as if he had newly torn off his chains and escaped ; another so stupidly senseless, that you may thrust pins into him up to the head, and he startles not at it ! one so dumpishly sad, as if he would freeze to death in melancholy, and hated any contentment but in sorrow ; another so apishly jocund, as if he cared for no other pastime than to play with feathers ! one so superstitiously devout, that he is ready to cringe and crouch to every stock ; another so wildly profane, that he is ready to spit God in the face ! shortly, one so censorious of others, as if he thought all men mad but himself ; another so mad, as that he thinks himself and all madmen sober and well-witted ! In this store and variety of distempers, were I not sure of my own principles, I could easily misdoubt myself : now, settled on firm grounds, I can pity and bewail the woeful distraction of many, and can but send them for recovery to that divine Wisdom, who calls to them in the openings of the gates, and uttereth her words, saying, “ How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity ? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge ? Turn you at my reproof,” Prov. i. 22. “ O ye simple, understand wisdom ; and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart,” Prov. viii. 5. “ Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates ; but he that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul : all they that hate me, love death,” Prov. viii. 34, 36.

LXII. Man, as he consists of a double nature, flesh and spirit, so is he placed in a middle rank, betwixt an angel which is spirit, and a beast which is flesh ; partaking of the qualities, and performing the acts of both. He is angelical in his understanding ; in his sensual affections, bestial ; and to whether of these he most inclineth and conformeth himself, that part wins more of the other, and gives a denomination to him ; so as he that was before half angel, half beast, if he be drowned in sensuality, hath lost the angel, and is become a beast ; if he be wholly taken up with heavenly meditations, he hath quit the beast and

is improved angelical. It is hard to hold an equal temper: either he must degenerate into a beast, or be advanced to an angel. Mere reason sufficiently apprehends the difference of the condition: could a beast be capable of that faculty, he would wish to be a man, rather than a brute, as he is. There is not more difference betwixt a man and beast, than between an angel and a brutish man. How must I needs therefore be worse than a beast, if, when I may be preferred to that happy honour, I shall rather affect to be a beast, than an angel! Away then with the bestial delights of the sensual appetite: let not my soul sink in this mud: let me be wholly for those intellectual pleasures which are pure and spiritual: and let my ambition be, to come as near to the angel, as this clog of my flesh will permit.

LXIII. There is great difference in men's dispositions under affliction: some there are, dead-hearted patients, that grow mopish and stupid, with too deep a sense of their sufferings; others, out of a careless jollity, are insensible even of sharp and heavy crosses. We are wont to speak of some whose enchanted flesh is invulnerable: this is the state of those hearts which are so bewitched with worldly pleasures, that they are not to be pierced with any calamity that may befall them in their estates, children, husbands, wives, friends: so as they can say, with Solomon's drunkard, "They have stricken me, and I was not sick: they have beaten me, but I felt it not," Prov. xxiii. 35. These are dead flesh, which do no more feel the knife, than if it did not at all enter; for whom some corrosives are necessary to make them capable of smart. This disposition, though it seem to carry a face of fortitude and patience, yet is justly offensive, and not a little injurious both to God and the soul;—to God, whom it endeavours to frustrate of those holy ends which he proposeth to himself in our sufferings; for wherefore doth he afflict us, if he would not have us afflicted? wherefore doth the father whip the child, but that he would have him smart, and by smarting, bettered? he looks for cries and tears, and the child that weeps not under the rod, is held graceless:—to the soul, which it robs of the benefit of our suffering; for what use can there be of patience,

where there is no sense of evil? and how can patience have its perfect work, where it is not? Betwixt both these extremes, if we would have our souls prosper, a mid-disposition must be attained. We must be so sensible of evils, that we be not stupified with them; and so resolute under our crosses, that we may be truly sensible of them. Not so brawned under the rod, that we should not feel it; nor yet so tender, that we should over-feel it. Not more patient under the stripe, than willing to kiss the hand that inflicts it.

LXIV. God, as he is one, so he loves singleness and simplicity in the inward parts. As therefore he hath been pleased to give us those senses double, whereby we might let in for ourselves, as our eyes and ears; and those limbs double, whereby we might act for ourselves, as our hands and feet; so those which he would appropriate to himself, as our hearts for belief, and our tongue for confession, he hath given us single; neither did he ever ordain or can abide two hearts in a bosom, two tongues in one mouth. It is then the hateful style, which the Spirit of God gives to a hypocrite, that he is "double-minded," James iv. 8. In the language of God's Spirit, a fool hath no heart; and a dissembler hath a head, and a heart; and surely as a man that hath two heads, is a monster in nature, so he that hath two hearts, is no less a spiritual monster to God; for the holy and wise God hath made one for one, one mind or soul for one body; and if the regenerate man have two men in one, the old man and the new, yet it is so as that one is flesh, the other spirit: the mind then is not double, but the law of the mind is opposed to the law of the flesh, Rom. vii. 23; so as here are strivings in one heart, not the sidings of two. For surely the God of unity can neither endure multiplication nor division of hearts, in one breast. If then we have one heart for God, another for mammon, we may be sure God will not own this latter. How should he, for he made it not? Yea, most justly will he disclaim both, since that which he made, was but one; this, double. And as the wise man hath told us, that God hates nothing which he hath made, so may we truly say, God hateth whatsoever he made not; since what he made not, is only evil. When I have done my best, I shall have but a weak

and a faulty heart ; but, Lord, let it be but a single one. “ Search me, O God, and know my heart : try me, and know my thoughts : and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting,” Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24.

LXV. There is a kind of not-being in sin ; for sin is not an existence of somewhat that is, but a deficiency of that rectitude which should be : it is a privation, but not without a real mischief ; as blindness is but a privation of sight, but a true misery. Now a privation cannot stand alone : it must have some subject to lean upon : there is no blindness, but where there is an eye ; no death, but where there hath been a life. Sin therefore supposes a soul, wherein it is ; and an act whereto it cleaveth : and those acts of sin are they which the apostle calls “ the works of darkness :” so that there is a kind of operosity in sin ; in regard whereof sinners are styled “ the workers of iniquity.” And, surely there are sins, wherein there is more toil and labour, than in the holiest actions. What pains and care doth the thief take, in setting his match, in watching for his prey ! How doth he spend the darkest and coldest nights in the execution of his plot ! What fears, what flights, what hazards, what shifts are here, to avoid notice and punishment ! The adulterer says, that “ stolen waters are sweet ;” but that sweet is sauced to him with many careful thoughts, with many deadly dangers. The superstitious bigot who is himself besotted with error, how doth he traverse sea and land to make a proselyte ! what adventures doth he make, what perils doth he run, what deaths doth he challenge, to mar a soul ! So as some men take more pains to go to hell, than some others do to go to heaven. O the sottishness of sinners, that with a temporary misery will needs purchase an eternal ! How should we think no pains sufficient for the attaining of heaven, when we see wretched men toil so much for damnation !

LXVI. With what elegance and force doth the Holy Ghost express our Saviour’s leaving of the world, which he calls his being taken home again, or his being received up ! Luke ix. 51. In the former, implying that the Son of God was, for the time, sent out of his Father’s house to

these lower regions of his exile or pilgrimage, and was now re-admitted into those his glorious mansions; in the latter, so intimating his triumphant ascension, that he passeth over his bitter passion. Surely he was to take death in his way: so he told his disciples in the walk to Emmaus; "Ought not Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory?" He must be lifted up to the cross ere his ascension to heaven. But as if the thought of death were swallowed up in the blessed issue of his death, here is no mention of ought but his assumption. Lo, death truly swallowed up in victory. Neither is it otherwise, proportionally, with us: wholly so it cannot be. For, as for him, death did but taste of him, could not devour him, much less put him over: it could not but yield him whole and entire the third day, without any impairing of his nature, yea, with a happy addition to it of a glorious immortality; and, in that glorified humanity, he ascended by his own power into his heaven. For us, we must be content that one part of us lie rotting for the time in the dust, while our spiritual part shall, by the ministry of angels, be received up to those everlasting habitations. Here is an assumption therefore, true and happy, though not as yet total. And why should I not therefore have my heart taken up with the assured expectation of this receiving up into my glory? Why do I not look beyond death, at the eternally-blessed condition of this soul of mine, which, in my dissolution, is thus crowned with immortality? So doth the sea-beaten mariner cheer up himself with the sight of that haven which he makes for. So doth the traveller comfort himself, when, after a tempestuous storm, he sees the sun breaking forth in his brightness. I am dying; but, O Saviour, thou art "the resurrection and the life; he that believes in thee, though he be dead, yet shall he live." "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead," Isaiah xxvi. 19. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." Rev. xiv. 13.

LXVII. What need I be troubled, that I find in myself a fear of death? What Israelite is not ready to run away

at the sight of this Goliath? This fear is natural, and so far from being evil, that it was incident into the Son of God, who was "heard in that he feared." Christianity serves not to destroy, but to rectify nature. Grace regulates this passion in us, and corrects the exorbitances of it; never intended to root it out. Let me therefore entertain this fear, but so as that I may master it. If I cannot avoid fear, let it be such as may be incident into a faithful man. While my fear apprehends just terror in the face of death, let my faith lay fast hold on that blessed Saviour who hath both overcome and sweetened it; on that blessed estate of glory which accompanies it: my fear shall end in joy; my death, in advantage.

LXVIII. It is too plain, that we are fallen upon the old age of the world, the last times, and therefore nearest to the dissolution. And if time itself did not evince it, the disposition and qualities would most evidently do it; for to what a cold temper of charity are we grown! what mere ice is in these spiritual veins! The unnatural and unkindly flushings of self-love abound indeed every where; but, for true Christian love, it is come to old David's pass; it may be covered with clothes, but it can get no heat; 1 Kings i. 1. Besides, what whimsies and fancies of dotage do we find the world possessed withal, beyond the examples of all former times! What wild and mad opinions have been lately broached, which the settled brains of better ages could never have imagined! Unto these, how extremely choleric the world is grown in these latter times, there needs no other proof, than the effusion of so much blood in this present age, as many preceding centuries of years have been sparing to spill. What should I speak of the moral distempers of diseases, the confluence whereof hath made this age more wickedly miserable, than all the former? for whenever was there so much profaneness, atheism, blasphemy, schism, excess, disobedience, oppression, licentiousness, as we now sigh under? Lastly, that which is the common fault of age, loquacity, is a plain evidence of the world's declinedness; for was there ever age guilty of so much tongue and pen as this last? were ever the presses so cloyed with frivolous work? every man thinks what he lists, and speaks what he thinks, and writes

what he speaks, and prints what he writes. Neither would the world talk so much, did it not make account it cannot talk long. What should we do then, since we know the world truly old, and now going upon his great and fatal climacterical, but, as discreet men would carry themselves to impotent and decrepit age, bear with the infirmities of it, pity and bewail the distempers, strive against the enormities, and prepare for the dissolution?

LXIX. There cannot be a stronger motive to awe and obedience, than that which St. Peter enforceth, that God is both a Father and a Judge; 1 Peter i. 17: the one is a title of love and mercy; the other, of justice. Whatever God is, he is all that; he is all love and mercy, he is all justice. He is not so a Judge, that he hath waved the title and affection of a Father; he is not so a Father, that he will remit ought of his infinite justice as a Judge. He is, he will ever be, both these in one; and we must fasten our eyes upon both these at once, and be accordingly affected unto both. He is a Father; therefore here must be a loving awe: he is a Judge; and therefore, here must be an awful love and obedience. So must we lay hold upon the tender mercies of a Father, that we may rejoice continually; so must we apprehend the justice of a righteous Judge, that we do lovingly tremble. Why then should man despair? God is a Father. All the bowels of mortal and human love are strait to his. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee," saith the Lord; Isaiah xlix. 15. That which is the title of his personality in divine relation, is also the title of his gracious relation to us—Father: neither can he be other than he is styled. And, contrarily, how dare man presume, since this Father is a Judge? It is for sinful flesh and blood to be partial; foolish parents may be apt to connive at the sins of their own loins or bowels, because theirs; either they will not see them, or not hate them, or not censure them, or not punish them: the infinite justice of a God cannot wink at our failings; there is no debt of our sin, but must be paid in ourselves or our surety. If then we call him "Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every

man's work," why do we not "pass the time of our sojourning here in fear?"

LXX. How terrible a motion was that which was made by the two disciples, of commanding fire to come down from heaven and consume the inhospitable Samaritans? Methinks I could tremble but at the imagination of so dreadful a judgment, as they did not fear to sue for. Yet if we look to the offence, it was no positive act of indignity offered to Christ; but the mere not lodging of his train; and that, not out of a rude inhumanity, but out of a religious scruple. What could they have said if these Samaritans had pursued them with swords, and staves, and stones? Whom shall we hope to find free from cruelty of revenge, when even the disciples of love were thus overtaken? What wonder is it if natural men be transported with furious desires, when so eminent domestics and followers of our Saviour were thus faulty? Surely nature in man is cruel; neither is there any creature under heaven so bloody to its own kind. Even bears, and wolves, and tigers devour not one another; and if any of them fall out in single combats for a prey, here is no public engaging for blood. Neither do they affect to enjoy each others' torment, rather entertaining one anothers' complaints with pity: let but a swine cry, the rest of the herd within the noise come running in to see and compassionate his pain. Only man rejoices in the misery of the same flesh and blood with himself, and loves to triumph in his revenge. While we are thus affected, we know not of what spirit we are: we may soon learn: we are even of that spirit, who was "a man-slayer from the beginning." As for the good Spirit, his just style is "the preserver of men," Job vii. 20; and the errand of the Son of Man was "not to destroy men's lives, but to save them;" and his charge to these and all other his disciples, "Be merciful, as your Father also is merciful," Luke vi. 36. And how easily may we observe, that this very disciple, as if in way of abundant satisfaction for this rash oversight, calls more for love, than all the rest of his Master's train! telling us, that "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him," 1 John iv. 16; and, "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one

that loveth, is of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love," 1 John iv. 7, 8. Shortly then, what would not this holy disciple have given to have recalled this fiery motion? The more mercy and charity is in us, the more we have of God; the more fury and revenge, of Satan.

LXXI. Much caution must be had in our imitation of the actions of the holiest: cautions, both in respect of the persons, and of the actions. God himself, yea, God clothed in flesh, though the pattern of all perfection, is not for our universal imitation: the most of his actions are for our wonder, not for our exempling. And amongst men, how absurd were it in a peasant to imitate a king! or one of the long robe, a soldier! If Moses climb up the hill of God, Sinai; shall another Israelite say, "Moses goes up; why not I?" so he might have paid dear for his presumption. Moses was called up: the rest were limited; and "if a beast touch the hill, he shall die." That act may beseem one, which would be very incongruous in another: the dog fawns upon his master, and hath his back stroked; if the ass do the like, he is beaten. We are naturally apt to be carried with examples. It is one of the greatest improvements of wisdom to know whom, in what, and how far, we may imitate. The best have their weaknesses; there is no copy without a blur. "Be ye followers of me," saith the chosen vessel: but how? "even as I am of Christ," Phil. iii. 17; 1 Cor. iv. 16; 1 Cor. xi. 1. It is safe following him that cannot err.

LXXII. God who is simply one, infinitely perfect, absolutely complete in himself, enjoys himself fully from all eternity, without any relation to the creature: but knowing our wants and weaknesses, he hath ordained a society for our well-being; and therefore, even in man's innocency, could say, "It is not good for man to be alone." And why, Lord? Why might not man have taken pleasure enough in the beauty and sweetness of his paradise; in contemplating thy heaven; in the command of thine obsequious creatures; and, above all, in the fruition of thy divine presence, in that happy integrity of his nature, without any accession of other helps? Surely thou who knewest well what disposition thou hadst put into him,

intendedst to fit him with all meet conveniences ; and thou who madest him sociable, before he could have any society, thoughtest fit to stead him with such a society, as might make his life comfortable to him. Wise Solomon observes it, out of his deep experience, for “ a vanity under the sun, that there is one alone, and there is not a second ;” and that “ two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour,” Eccl. iv. 7—9. In the plantation of the evangelical church, the apostles are not reckoned single, but by pairs, Matth. x. 2—4 ; and so doth their Lord send them upon the great errand of his gospel : and when he seconded that work, by a commission given to his seventy disciples, he “ sent them two and two before his face, into every city and place, whither he himself would come,” Luke x. 1. After this, when our Saviour had left the earth, Paul and Barnabas go together ; and, when they are parted, Paul and Silas, Barnabas and Mark, are sorted. Single endeavours seldom prosper : many hands make the work both quick and sure. They can be no friends to the happy estate of a family or church, that labour to cause distractions : division makes certain way for ruin.

LXXIII. Under the law, there was difference, as of ages, so of sexes. Circumcision was appropriated to the male. In the temple, there was the court of the Jews, and, without that, the court of the women : neither might that sex go beyond their bounds : and still it is so in their Jewish synagogues. But in Christ “ there is neither male nor female.” As the soul hath no sex, so God makes no difference in the acceptation of either. As it is the honour of the one sex, that Christ, the Son of God, was a man, so it is the honour of the other sex, that he was born of a woman. And if the woman be, as she is in nature, the weaker vessel, yet she is no less capable of grace, than the stronger ; as the thinnest glass may receive as precious liquor, as the best plate. Good Anna, as well as Simeon, gave glory to the new-born Saviour “ to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.” And afterwards the holy women were no less zealous attendants of Christ, both in his life and death, than the most forward disciples, Luke viii. 2, 3 ; yea, they followed him when his domestic fol-

lowers forsook him, neither could be parted by either his cross or his grave. And they were the first that were honoured with the notice and message of their Saviour's blessed resurrection and ascension, John xx. 17; than which, what employment could be more noble? "The Lord gave the word," saith the psalmist; "great was the company of the preachers, Psalm lxxviii. 11: the word is feminine. However therefore, in natural and politic respects, the philosopher might have some reason to bless God that he had made him a man, and not a woman; yet in spiritual, which are the best, regards, here is no inequality: so that it is the great mercy and goodness of our common Creator, that though he hath made a difference in the smallest matters, yet he makes none in the greatest; and that he so indifferently peoples heaven with both sexes, that for ought we know, the greatest saint there is of the weaker sex.

LXXIV. There is nothing more easy, than for a man to be courageous in a time of safety, and to defy those dangers which he neither feels nor sees. While the coast is clear, every man can be ready to say, with Peter, "Though all men, yet not I. If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise." But when the evil hour cometh, when our enemy appears armed in the lists ready to encounter us, then to call up our spirits and to grapple resolutely with dangers and death, is the praise and proof of a true Christian valour. And this is that which the apostle calls "standing," Eph. vi. 13, 14, in opposition to both falling and fleeing; falling, out of faintness; and fleeing, for fear. It will not be possible for us thus to stand, if we will trust to our feet. In and of ourselves, the best of us are but mere cowards; neither can be able so much as to look our enemy in the face. Would we be perfect victors? we must go out of ourselves into the God of our strength. If we have made him ours, who shall, yea, who can be against us? We "can do all things through him that strengtheneth us;" "all things;" therefore conquer death and hell. If we be weakness, he is omnipotence. Put we on the Lord Jesus Christ by a lively faith, what enemy can come within us to do us hurt? "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee, O God. In thee, O God,

have I trusted; I will not fear what" either flesh or spirit "can do unto me," Psalm lvi. 3, 4. "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer: my God, my strength, in whom I will trust, my buckler, and the horn of my salvation. I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from mine enemies." Psalm xviii. 2, 3.

LXXV. It is disparagement enough, that the apostle casts upon all the visible things of this world, that "the things which are seen are temporal." Be they never so glorious, yet, being transitory, they cannot be worthy of our hearts. Who would care for a house of glass, if never so curiously painted and gilded? All things that are measured by time, are thus brittle. Bodily substances, of what kind soever, lie open to the eye; and, being seen, can be in no other than a fading condition. Even that goodly fabric of heaven, which we see and admire, must be changed, and, in a sort, dissolved. How much more vanishing are all earthly glories! And by how much shorter their continuance is, so much lower must be their valuation. We account him foolish, that will dote too much upon a flower, though never so beautiful; because we know it can be but a month's pleasure, and no care, no art can preserve it from withering: amongst the rest, the hemerocallis is the least esteemed, because one day ends its beauty. What madness then were it in us, to set our hearts upon these perishing contentments which we must soon mutually leave; we them, they us! Eternity is that only thing which is worthy to take up the thoughts of a wise man: that, being added to evil, makes the evil infinitely more intolerable; and being added to good, makes the good infinitely more desirable. O eternity, thou bottomless abyss of misery to the wicked; thou indeterminate pitch of joy to the saints of God; what soul is able to comprehend thee? What strength of understanding is able to conceive of thee? Be thou ever in my thoughts, ever before mine eyes. Be thou the scope of all my actions, of all my endeavours; and, in respect of thee, let all this visible world be to me as nothing. And since only the things which are not seen by the eye of sense, are eternal, Lord, sharpen thou the eyes of my faith, that I may see

those things invisible; and may, in that sight, enjoy thy blessed eternity.

LXXVI. What is all the world to us in comparison of the bird in our bosom, our conscience? In vain shall all the world acquit and magnify us, if that secretly condemn us; and, if that condemn us not, "we have confidence towards God," and may bid defiance to men and devils. Now that it may not condemn us, it must be both pacified and purged; pacified, in respect of the guilt of sin; purged, in respect of the corruption; for so long as there is guilt in the soul, the clamours of an accusing and condemning conscience can no more be stilled, than the waters of the sea can stand still in a storm. There is then no pacification without removing the guilt of sin; no removing of guilt without remission; no remission without satisfaction; no satisfaction without a price of infinite value, answerable to the infiniteness of the justice offended; and this is no where to be had, but in the blood of Christ, God and man. All created and finite powers are but miserable comforters, physicians of no value, to this one. And the same power that pacifieth the conscience from the guilt, must also purge it from the filthiness of sin; Heb. ix. 14; 1 John i. 7. even that blood of the Son of God, who "is made unto us of God sanctification and redemption." That faith which brings Christ home to the soul, doth, by the efficacy of his blessed Spirit, purify the heart from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit. Being justified by this faith, we have peace with God. When once the heart is quieted from the uproars of self-accusation, and cleansed from dead works, what in this world can so much concern us, as to keep it so? which shall be done, if we will give Christ the possession of our souls, and commit the keys into his only hands: so shall nothing be suffered to enter in, that may disturb or defile it, if we shall settle firm resolutions in our breasts never to yield to the commission of any known sin. Failings and slips there will be in the holiest of God's saints, while they carry their clay about them: for these we are allowed to fetch forth a pardon, of course, from that infinite mercy of our God, which hath set a fountain open "to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness," by

the force of our daily prayers. But if, through an overbold security and spiritual negligence, we shall suffer ourselves to be drawn away into some heinous wickedness, it must cost warm water to recover us. Neither can it, in such a case, be safe for us to suffer our eyes to sleep or our eye-lids to slumber, till we have made our peace with heaven. This done and carefully maintained, what can make us other than happily secure? “Blessed is he whose conscience hath not condemned him, and who is not fallen from his hope in the Lord,” *Ecclus. xiv. 2.*

LXXVII. We cannot apprehend heaven in any notion, but of excellency and glory; that, as it is in itself a place of wonderful resplendence and majesty, so it is the palace of the most high God, wherein he exhibits his infinite magnificence; that it is the happy receptacle of all the elect of God; that it is the glorious rendezvous of the blessed angels; that we have parents, children, husband, wife, brothers, sisters, friends whom we dearly loved, there; for such is the power of love, that it can endear any place to us where the party affected is; much more the best. If it be a loathsome gaol, our affection can make it a delightful bower. Yea, the very grave cannot keep us off: the women could say of Mary, that she was gone to the grave of Lazarus to weep there; and the zeal of those holy clients of Christ carries them to seek their, as they supposed, still dead Saviour, even in his tomb. Above all conceivable apprehensions then, wherein heaven is endeared to us, there is none comparable to that which the apostle enforceth to us, that there “Christ sitteth at the right-hand of God.” If we have a husband, wife, child, whom we dearly love, pent up in some tower or castle afar off, whither we are not allowed to have access, how many longing eyes do we cast thither! how do we please ourselves to think, ‘Within those walls is he inclosed whom my soul loveth, and who is inclosed in my heart!’ But, if it may be possible to have passage, though with some difficulty and danger, to the place, how gladly do we put ourselves upon the adventure! When therefore we hear and certainly know, that our most dear Saviour is above in all heavenly glory, and that the heavens must contain him till his coming again, with what full contentment of heart

should we look up thither! How should we break through all these secular distractions, and be carried up by our affections, which are the wings of the soul, towards a happy fruition of him! Good old Jacob, when he heard that his darling son was yet alive in Egypt, how doth he gather up his spirits, and take up a cheerful resolution. "Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die." Do we think his heart was any more in Canaan after he heard where his Joseph was? And shall we, when we hear and know where our dearest Saviour, typified by that good patriarch, is; that he is gone before, to provide a place for us in the rich Goshen above; shall we be heartless in our desires towards him, and take up with earth? How many poor souls take tedious, costly, perilous voyages to that land, which only the bodily presence of our Saviour could denominate holy, their own wickedness justly styles it accursed, only to see the place, where our dear Saviour trod, where he stood, where he sat, lay, set his last footing; and find a kind of contentment in this sacred curiosity, yet returning never the holier, never the happier! How then should I be affected with the sight of that place, where he is now in person, sitting gloriously at the right-hand of Majesty, adored by all the powers of heaven! Let it be a covenant between me and my eyes, never to look up at heaven, (as how can I look beside it?) but I shall, in the same instant, think of my blessed Saviour, sitting there in his glorified humanity, united to the incomprehensibly-glorious Deity, attended and worshipped by thousand thousands of saints and angels, preparing a place for me and all his elect in those eternal mansions.

LXXVIII. How lively doth the Spirit of God describe the heavenly affections of faithful Abraham, that "he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God!" What city was this, but the celestial Jerusalem, the glorious seat of the great empire of heaven? The main strength of any building is in the foundation: if that be firm and sure, the fabric, well knit together, will stand; but if that be either not laid, or lie loose and unsettled, the tottering frame doth but wait upon the next wind for a ruin. The good patriarch had been used to dwell in tents, which were not capable of a foun-

dation. It is like, he and his ancestors wanted not good houses in Chaldea, where they were formerly planted. God calls him forth of those fixed habitations in his own country, to sojourn in tabernacles or booths in a strange land: his faith carries him cheerfully along; his present fruition gives way to hope for better things. Instead of those poor sheds of sticks and skins, he looks for a city; instead of those stakes and cords, he looks for foundations; instead of men's work, he looks for the architecture of God. Alas, we men will be building castles and towers here upon earth, or in the air rather; such as either have no foundation at all, or, at the best, only a foundation in the dust; neither can they be any other, while they are of man's making; for what can he make in better condition than himself? The city that is of God's building, is deep and firmly grounded upon the rock of his eternal decree; and hath more foundations than one, and all of them both sure and costly. God's material house, built by Solomon, had the foundation laid with great squared stone; but the foundations of the wall of this city of God are "garnished with all manner of precious stones," Rev. xxi. 19. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O thou city of God. Why do I set up my rest in this house of clay, which is every day falling on my head, while I have the assured expectation of so glorious a dwelling above? "For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." 2 Cor. v. 1.

LXXIX. God, though he be free of his entertainments, yet is curious of his guests. We know what the great house-keeper said to the sordid guest; "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?" To his feast of glory none can come, but the pure; without this disposition, no man shall so much as see God, much less be entertained by him. To his feast of grace none may come, but the clean, and those who, upon strict examination, have found themselves worthy. That we may be meet to sit at either of these tables, there must be a putting off, ere there can be a putting on; a putting off the old garments, ere there can be a putting on the new: the old are foul and ragged, the new, clean and holy: for if

they should be worn at once, the foul and beastly undergarment would soil and defile the clean; the clean could not cleanse the foul. As it was in the Jewish law of holiness, holy flesh in the skirt of the garment could not infuse a holiness into the garment; but the touch of an unclean person might diffuse uncleanness to the garment, Hag. ii. 12, 13; thus our professed holiness and pretended graces are sure to be defiled by our secretly-maintained corruption, not our corruption sanctified by our graces: as, in common experience, if the sound person come to see the infected, the infected may easily taint the sound; the sound cannot, by his presence, heal the infected. If ever therefore we look to be welcome to the feasts of God, we must “put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.” Col. iii. 9, 10.

LXXX. It is not for us to cast a disparagement upon any work of our Maker, much less upon a piece so near, so essential to us; yet, with what contempt doth the apostle seem still to mention our flesh! And as if he would have it slighted for some forlorn outcast, he charges us not to make “provision for the flesh.” What, shall we think the holy man was fallen out with a part of himself? Surely sometimes his language that he gives it, is hard. “The flesh warreth against the spirit. I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing,” Rom. vii. 18. But how easy is it to observe, that “the flesh” sometimes goes for the body of man, sometimes, for the body of sin. As the first, it is a partner with the soul; as the latter, it is an enemy, and the worst of enemies, spiritual. No marvel then if he would not have provision made for such an enemy. In outward and bodily enmity, the case and his charge is otherwise; “If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink;” Prov. xxv. 21; Rom. xii. 20: but here, “Make not provision for the flesh.” What reason were there, that a man should furnish and strengthen an enemy against himself? But if “the flesh” be the body of the man, it must challenge a respect; but the very name carries an intimation of baseness: at the best, it is that which is common to beasts with us; “There is one flesh,” saith the apostle, “of men; another flesh of beasts;”

both are but flesh. Alas, what is it but a clod of earth better moulded, the clog of the soul, a rotten pile, a pack of dust, a feast of worms? But, even as such, provision must be made for it, with a moderate and thrifty care, not with a solicitous; a provision for the necessities and convenience of life, not for the fulfilling of the lusts. This flesh must be fed and clad; not humoured, not pampered: so fed, as to hold up nature, not inordinateness: shortly, such a hand must we hold over it, as that we make it a good servant, not a lawless wanton.

LXXXI. What action was ever so good or so completely done, as to be well taken of all hands? Noah and Lot foretell of judgments from God upon the old world and Sodom, and are scoffed at. Israel would go to sacrifice to God in the wilderness, and they are idle. Moses and Aaron will be governing Israel according to God's appointment; "Ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi." David will be dancing before the ark of the Lord; "He uncovers himself shamelessly, as one of the vain fellows." John the Baptist is solitary, and austere; he doth it by Beelzebub, the prince of devils. Our Saviour is sociable; he is "a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." He rides in a homely pomp through Jerusalem; he affects a temporal kingdom, and he is no friend to Cæsar, that can suffer him to live. He is, by his almighty power, risen from the dead; his disciples stole him away while the soldiers slept. The Spirit of God descends upon the apostles in fiery and cloven tongues, and they, thus inspired, suddenly speak all languages; they "are full of new wine." Stephen preacheth Christ, the end of the law; "he speaks blasphemous words against Moses and against God." And what aspersions were cast upon the primitive Christians, all histories witness. What can we hope to do or say, that shall escape the censures and misinterpretations of men, when we see the Son of God could not avoid them? Let a man profess himself honestly conscionable; he is a scrupulous hypocrite. Let him take but a just liberty in things merely indifferent; he is loosely profane. Let him be charitably affected to both parties, though in a quarrel not fundamental; he is an odious neuter, a lukewarm Laodicean. It concerns every wise Christian to settle his heart in a

resolved confidence of his own holy and just grounds ; and then to go on in a constant course of his well-warranted judgment and practice, with a careless disregard of those fools'-bolts which will be sure to be shot at him, which way soever he goes.

LXXXII. All God's dear and faithful ones are notably described by the apostle to be such as " love the appearing of our Lord Jesus ;" for certainly we cannot be true friends to those whose presence we do not desire and delight in. Now this appearing is either in his coming to us, or in our going to him : whether ever it be, that he makes his glorious return to us for the judgment of the world and the full redemption of his elect, or that he fetches us home to himself for the fruition of his blessedness, in both or either we enjoy his appearance. If then we can only be content with either of these, but do not love them nor wish for them, our hearts are not yet right with God. It is true, that there is some terror in the way to both these : his return to us is not without a dreadful majesty, for " the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat," and the glorious retinue of his blessed angels must needs be with an astonishing magnificence ; and, on the other part, our passage to him must be through the gates of death, wherein nature cannot but apprehend a horror : but the immediate issue of both these is so infinitely advantageous and happy, that the fear is easily swallowed up of the joy. Doth the daughter of Jephthah abate aught of her timbrels and dances, because she is to meet a father whose arms are bloody with victory ? Judges xi. 34. Doth a loving wife entertain her returning husband otherwise than with gladness, because he comes home in a military pomp ? Is the conqueror less joyful to take up his crown, because it is congratulated to him with many peals of ordnance ? Certainly then neither that heavenly state wherein Christ shall return to us, nor the fears of a harmless and beneficial death wherein we shall pass to him, neither may nor can hinder aught of our love to his appearing. O Saviour, come in whatever equipage or fashion thou wilt, thou canst be no other than lovely and welcome. " Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

LXXXIII. Suppose a man comes to me on the same

errand which the prophet delivered to Hezekiah; "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live;" with what welcome do I entertain him? Do I, with that good king, turn my face to the wall and weep? or do I say of the messenger, as David said of Ahimaaz, "He is a good man, and brings good tidings?" Surely nature urges me to the former, which cannot but hold dissolution her greatest enemy; for what can she abhor so much, as a not-being? Faith persuades me to the latter, telling me that, "to die is gain." Now whether of these two shall prevail with me? Certainly, as each of them hath a share in me, so shall either of them act its own part in my soul. Nature shall obtain so much of me, as to fetch from me, upon the sudden apprehension of death, some thoughts of fear; faith shall strait step in and drive away all those weak fears, and raise up my heart to a cheerful expectation of so gainful and happy a change. Nature shews me the ghastliness of death; faith shews me the transcendency of heavenly glory. Nature represents to me a rotten carcase; faith presents me with a glorious soul. Shortly, nature startles at the sight of death; faith out-faces and overcomes it. So then I, who at the first blush could say, "O death, how bitter is thy remembrance!" can now, upon my deliberate thoughts, say, "I desire to depart, and to be with Christ."

LXXXIV. In the carriage of our holy profession, God can neither abide us cowardly, nor indiscreet. The same mouth that bade us, when we are persecuted in one city, flee into another, said also, "He that will save his life, shall lose it." We may neither cloak cowardice with a pretended discretion, nor lose our discretion in a rash courage. He that is most skilful and most valiant, may, in his combat, traverse his ground for an advantage, and the stoutest commander may fall flat to avoid a cannon-shot. True Christian wisdom, and not carnal fear, is that, wherein we must consult for advice when to stand to it, and when to give back. On the one side, he dies honourably that falls in God's quarrel; on the other, he that flies, may fight again. Even our blessed Leader, that came purposely to give his life for the world, yet, when he found that he was laid for in Judea, flees into Galilee.

The practice of some primitive Christians, who, in an ambition of martyrdom went to seek out and challenge dangers and death, is more worthy of our wonder and applause, than our imitation. It shall be my resolution to be warily thrifty in managing my life, when God offers me no just cause of hazard; and to be willingly profuse of my blood, when it is called for by that Saviour, who was not sparing of shedding his most precious blood for me.

LXXXV. He had need to be well under-laid, that knows how to entertain the time and himself with his own thoughts. Company, variety of employments, or recreations, may wear out the day with the emptiest hearts; but when a man hath no society but of himself, no task to set himself upon but what arises from his own bosom, surely if he have not a good stock of former notions or an inward mint of new, he shall soon run out of all, and, as some forlorn bankrupt, grow weary of himself. Hereupon it is, that men of barren and unexercised hearts can no more live without company, than fish out of the water; and those eremites and other votaries, who, professing only devotion, have no mental abilities to set themselves on work, are fain to tire themselves and their unwelcome hours, with the perpetual repetitions of the same orisons, which are now grown to a tedious and heartless formality. Those contemplative spirits that are furnished with gracious abilities and got into acquaintance with the God of heaven, may and can lead a life, even in the closest restraint or wildest solitariness, nearest to angelical; but those which neither can have Mary's heart nor will have Martha's hand, must needs be unprofitable to others and wearisome to themselves.

LXXXVI. There is nothing more easy, than to be a Christian at large; but the beginnings of a strict and serious Christianity are not without much difficulty; for nature affects a loose kind of liberty, which it cannot endure to have restrained: neither fares it otherwise with it, than with some wild colt, which, at the first taking up, flings, and plunges, and will stand on no ground; but after it hath been somewhat disciplined at the post, is grown tractable, and quietly submits either to the saddle or the collar. The first is the worst; afterwards that

which was tolerable will prove easy; and that which was easy will be found pleasant; for in true practical Christianity, there is a more kindly and better liberty. "Stand fast," saith the apostle, "in that liberty, wherewith Christ hath made you free." Lo here a liberty of Christ's making, and therefore both just and excellent; for what other is this liberty, than a freedom, as from the tyranny of the law, so from the bondage of sin? "Being then made free from sin," saith St. Paul, "ye became the servants of righteousness," Rom. vi. 18. Here are two masters, under one of which every soul must serve, either sin or righteousness: if we be free from one, we are bond-men to the other. We say truly, the service of God, that is, of righteousness, is perfect freedom; but to be free to sin is a perfect bondage; and to serve sin, is no other than a vassalage to the Devil. From this bondage, Christ only can free us. "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed," John viii. 36: and we are no Christians unless we be thus freed; and, being thus freed, we shall rejoice in the pleasant fetters of our voluntary and cheerful obedience to righteousness; neither would we, for a world, return to those gieves and manacles of sin, which we once held our most dear and comely ornaments; and can truly say, "Thou hast set my feet in a large room," Psalm xxxi. 8. "I will walk at liberty, for I seek thy precepts," Psalm cxix. 45.

LXXXVII. I cannot but pity and lament the condition of those Christians, who, for the hope of a little earthly dross, do willingly put themselves, for a continuance, out of the pale of God's church. What do they else, but cast themselves quite out of the Almighty's protection, who hath not bound himself to follow them out of his own walks, or to seek them out amongst Turks and infidels? Well may he say to them, as to the chief pastor of Pergamus, "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is," Rev. ii. 13. But have they any reason to expect, that he should dwell with them there, under the reign of that prince of darkness? These men put upon themselves that hard measure which the man after God's own heart complains to be put upon him by his worst enemies; "Woe is me, that I am constrained to dwell

with Mesech, and to have my habitation among the tents of Kedar," Psalm cxx. 5. That holy man could, in the bitterness of his soul, inveigh against his persecutors, for no other terms, than these men offer to themselves; "Cursed be they before the Lord, for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go, serve other gods," 1 Sam. xxvi. 19. I speak not of those who carry God along with them in his ordinance; all earths are alike to us, where we may freely enjoy his presence; but of those stragglers who care not to live without God, so they may be befriended by mammon. How ill a match these poor men make for themselves, I send them to their Saviour to learn; "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" God forbid, I should give up their souls for lost; but I must say, they are hazarded; for herein doubtless they tempt God, who hath not promised to keep them in any other, than their just ways; and they do, in a sort, tempt and challenge Satan to draw them on either to a love of error and impiety, or at least to a cooling of their care and love of truth. How unlike are these men to that wise merchant in the gospel! He sold all that he had, to buy the pearl of great price; they sell the pearl, to buy a little worthless merchandize. As the greatest part of their traffic stands upon exchange, so I heartily wish they would make this one exchange more, of less care of their wealth for more care of their souls.

LXXXVIII. Even when Joseph was a great lord in Egypt, second to none but Pharaoh, and had the command of that richest country of the world; yet then his old father Jacob thought his poor parcel of Shechem worthy to be bequeathed to him and embraced of him, as a noble patrimony, because it was in the promised land, and the legacy of a dying father. How justly do I admire the faith both of the father and son, in this donation! Jacob was now in Goshen; Shechem was in Canaan; neither was the father now in the present possession, nor were the sons in some ages to enjoy it; it was four hundred and thirty years, that Israel must be a sojourner in a strange country, ere they shall enter into the promised land,

Exod. xii. 41 ; yet now, as foreseeing the future possession which his posterity should take of this spot of earth so long after, Jacob gives Shechem to Joseph, and Joseph apprehends it as a rich blessing, as the double portion of the divided primogeniture. Infidelity is purblind, and can see nothing but that, which is hard at hand ; faith is quick-sighted, and discerns the events of many centuries of years, yea, of ages to come. Abraham saw his Saviour's day, and rejoiced to see it, a thousand, nine hundred, and forty years off ; and Adam, before him, almost four thousand years. As to God all things are present, even future, so to those that by a lively faith partake of him. Why do I not, by that faith, see my Saviour returning in his heavenly magnificence, as truly as now I see the heaven whence he shall come ? and my body as verily raised from the dust and become glorious, as now I see it weak, and decrepit, and falling into the dust ?

LXXXIX. True knowledge causeth appetite and desire ; for the will follows the understanding : whatsoever that apprehends to be good for us, the effective part inclines to it. No man can have any regard to an unknown good. If a hungry man did not know that food would refresh and nourish him, or the thirsty that drink would satisfy him, or the naked that fire would warm him, or the sick that physic would recover him, none of these would affect these succours. And according to our apprehension of the goodness and use of these helps, so is our appetite towards them ; for the object of the will is a known good, either true or appearing so. And if our experience can tell us of some that can say, with her in the poet, " I see and approve better things, but follow the worse ;" it is not for that evil as evil, much less as worse, can fall into the will, but that their appetite over-carries them to a misconceit of a particular good ; so as howsoever, in a generality, they do confusedly assent to the goodness of some holy act or object, yet, upon the present occasion, here and now as the school speaketh, their sensitive appetite hath prevailed to draw them to a persuasion, that this pleasure or that profit is worthy to be embraced. Like as our first parents had a general apprehension, that it was good to obey all the commands of their Creator, but when

it came to the forbidden fruit, now their eye and their ear and their heart tell them, it is good for them, both for pleasure and for the gain of knowledge, to taste of that forbidden tree. So then the miscarriage is not in that they affect that which they think not to be good, but in that they think that to be good, which is not : for, alas, for one true good there are many seeming, which delude the soul with a fair semblance ; as a man, in a generality, esteems silver above brass, but when he meets with a rusty piece of silver and a clear piece of brass, he chuses rather the clear brass than the silver defaced with rust. Surely it is our ignorance that is guilty of our cool neglect of our spiritual good. If we did know how sweet the Lord is in his sure promises, in his unfailing mercies, we could not but long after him, and remain unsatisfied till we find him ours. Would God be pleased to shine in our hearts by the light of the true knowledge of himself, we could not have cause to complain of want of heat in our affections towards his infinite goodness. Did we but know how sweet and delectable, Christ, the heavenly manna, is, we could not but hunger after him ; and we could not hunger and not be satisfied, and, in being satisfied, blessed.

XC. Those which we miscall goods, are but, in their nature, indifferent ; and are either good or evil as they are affected, as they are used. Indeed all their malignity or virtue is in the mind, in the hand, of the possessor, Riches ill got, ill kept, ill spent, are but the mammon of iniquity ; but if well, “the crown of the wise is their riches,” Prov. xiv. 24. How can it be amiss to have much, when he that was the richest man of the east, was the holiest ? Job i. 1, 3 ; yea, when God himself is justly styled the Possessor of heaven and earth ? How can it be amiss to have little, when our Saviour says, “Blessed are ye poor ?” Luke vi. 20. And if from that divine mouth we hear a woe to the rich, himself interprets it of them that trust in riches, Luke vi. 24 ; Mark x. 24 ; 1 Tim. vi. 17. If our riches possess us, instead of our possessing them, we have changed our God and lost ourselves ; but if we have learnt to use our wealth and not enjoy it, we may be no less gracious than rich. If a rich man have a large and humble heart and a just hand, he inherits the blessing of

the poor ; if a poor man have a proud heart and a thievish hand, he carries away the woe from the rich. " Riches," saith wise Solomon, " make themselves wings ; they fly away as an eagle towards heaven," Prov. xxiii. 5. So as we may use the matter, our souls may fly thitherward with them ; if we " do good, and be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for ourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that we may lay hold on eternal life," 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19. Let me say with Agur, " Give me neither poverty nor riches ;" but whithersoever God gives, I am both thankful and indifferent, so that while I am rich in estate, I may be poor in spirit ; and while I am poor in estate, I may be rich in grace.

XCI. Had I been in the streets of Jericho, sure, methinks, I should have justled with Zaccheus for the sycamore to see Jesus, and should have blessed my eyes for so happy a prospect ; and yet I consider that many a one saw his face on earth, who shall never see his glory in heaven ; and I hear the apostle say, " Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more," 2 Cor. v. 16. O for the eyes of a Stephen, that " saw the heavens opened, and the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God !" Acts vii. 55, 56. That prospect did as much transcend this of Zaccheus, as heaven is above earth, celestial glory above human infirmity. And why should not the eyes of my faith behold the same object which was seen by Stephen's bodily eyes ? I see thee, O Saviour, I see thee, as certainly, though not so clearly. Do you sharpen and fortify these weak eyes of mine, that in " thy light I may see light."

XCII. How gracious a word was that which God said to Israel, " I have called thee by thy name," and " thou art mine !" Isaiah xliii. 1. He who imposed that name upon Jacob, makes familiar use of it to his posterity. Neither is the case singular, but universally common to all his spiritual issue. There is not one of them, whom he doth not both call by his name and challenge for his own. He that " telleth the number of the stars and calleth them all by their names," hath also a name for every of these earthly luminaries. He who brought all other living crea-

tures unto man to see how he would call them, and would make use of Adam's appellation, reserved the naming of man to himself, Gen. ii. 19, 20. Neither is there any one of his innumerable posterity, whom he knows not by name. But it is one thing to take notice of their names; another thing to call them by their names: that denotes his omniscience; this, his specialty of favour: none are thus graced but the true sons of Israel. As God's children do not content themselves with a confused knowledge of a Deity, but rest not till they have attained a distinct apprehension of their God as he hath revealed himself to man, so doth God again to them: it is not enough that he knows them in a general view as in the throng, wherein we see many faces, none distinctly; but he singles them out in a familiar kind of severality both of knowledge and respect. As then he hath names for the several stars of heaven, Cimah, Cesil, Mazzaroth, Job ix. 9; xxxviii. 31; and for the several angels, Gabriel, Raphael, Michael, and calls them by the proper names which he hath given them; so he doth to every one of his faithful ones: of one he saith, "Thou shalt call his name John;" of another, "Thou art Simon, thou shalt be called Cephas;" to one he says, "Zaccheus, come down;" to another, "Cornelius, thy prayers and thine alms are come up." In short, there is no one of his whom he doth not both know, and call by his name. What a comfort is this to a poor wretched man, to think, 'Here I walk, obscure and contemptible upon earth, in a condition mean and despised of men; but the great God of heaven is pleased to take such notice of me, as even from heaven to call me by my name, and to single me out for grace and salvation; and not only mention my name from above in the gracious offer of his ordinances, but to write it in the eternal register of heaven. What care I to be inglorious, yea causelessly infamous with men, while I am thus honoured by the King of glory?'

XCIH. It is the great wisdom and providence of the Almighty so to order the dispositions and inclinations of men, that they affect divers and different works and pleasures; some are for manuary trades; others, for intellectual employments: one is for the land; another, for the sea; one, for husbandry; another, for merchandize;

one is for architecture; another, for vestiary services: one is for fishing; another, for pasturage: and, in the learned trades, one is for the mistress of sciences, divinity; another, for the law, whether civil or municipal; a third is for the search of the secrets of nature, and the skill and practice of physic; and each one of these divides itself into many differing varieties. Neither is it otherwise in matters of pleasure: one places his delight in following his hawk and hound: another, in the harmony of music: one makes his garden his paradise, and enjoys the flourishing of his fair tulips: another finds contentment in a choice library: one loves his bowl or his bow: another pleases himself in the patient pastime of his angle. For surely if all men affected one and the same trade of life or pleasure of recreation, it were not possible that they could live one by another; neither could there be any use of commerce, whereby man's life is maintained; neither could it be avoided, but that the envy of the inevitable rivalry would cut each other's throats. It is good reason we should make a right use of this gracious and provident dispensation of the Almighty: and therefore that we should improve our several dispositions and faculties to the advancing of the common stock; and withal, that we should neither encroach upon each others' profession, nor be apt to censure each others' recreation.

XCIV. He were very quicksighted, that could perceive the growing of the grass or the moving of the shadow upon the dial; yet when those are done, every eye doth easily discern them. It is no otherwise in the progress of grace; which how it increaseth in the soul and by what degrees, we cannot hope to perceive; but, being grown, we may see it. It is the fault of many Christians, that they depend too much upon sense, and make that the judge of their spiritual estate, being too much dejected, when they do not sensibly feel the proofs of their proficiency and the present proceedings of their regeneration. Why do they not as well question the growth of their stature, because they do not see every day how much they are thriven? Surely it must needs be, that spiritual things are less perceptible than bodily: much more there-

fore must we, in these, wait upon time for necessary conviction; and well may it suffice us, if, upon an impartial comparing of the present measure of our knowledge, faith, obedience, with the former, we can perceive ourselves any whit sensibly advanced.

XCV. The wise Christian hath learned to value every thing according to its own worth. If we be too glad of these earthly things, it is the way to be too much afflicted with their loss, and while we have them, to be transported into pride and wantonness; if we esteem them too little it is the way to an unthankful disrespect of the giver. Christianity carries the heart in a just equipoise. When they come, they are welcomed without too much joy; and when they go, they part without tears. We may smile at these earthly favours, not laugh out; we may like them, but we must take heed of being in love with them; for love, of what kind soever it be, is not without the power of assimilation. If we love the world, we cannot but be worldly-minded; "They that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh;" and "to be carnally minded, is death." Contrarily, if we love God, we are made partakers of the divine nature; and we are such as we affect. If we be Christians in earnest, certainly the inner rooms of our hearts, which are the holy of holies, are reserved for the Almighty; the outer courts may be for the common resort of lawful cares and desires. They may come and go, but our God shall have his fixed habitation here for ever.

XCVI. Nature is sly and cunning; neither is it possible to take her without a shift: the light hussy "wipes her mouth," and it was not she; Prov. xxx. 10. Rachael hath stolen her father's teraphim, and the custom of women is upon her. Saul reserves all the fat cattle of the Amalekites; it is for a sacrifice to the Lord his God. Neither is it so only in excusing an evil done, but in waving a good to be done, "I am not eloquent," saith Moses; "send by him, by whom thou shouldest send; Pharaoh will kill me: There is a lion in the way," saith the sluggard. "I have married a wife, I cannot come," saith the sensual guest. "If I give, I shall want." "If I make a strict profession, I shall be censured." Whereas true grace is,

on the one side, downright and ingenuous in its confessions, not sparing to take shame to itself, that it may give glory to God; on the other side, resolutely constant to its holy purposes. “I and my house will serve the Lord.” “If I perish, I perish.” “I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” It is not hard, therefore, for us to know what mistress we serve. If our care and endeavour be, by witty evasions to shuffle off both evil and good, we are the vassals of nature; but if we shall with an humble penitence acknowledge our evil, and set ourselves with firm resolutions upon the tasks of good, we are, under grace, in a way to glory.

XCVII. It is good for a man not always to keep his eyes at home; but sometimes to look abroad at his neighbours, and to compare his own condition with the worse estate of others. I know I deserve no more than the meanest, no better than the worst of men; yet how many do I see and hear to lie groaning upon their sick beds, in great extremity of torment; whereas I walk up and down in a competency of health! How many do I see ready to famish, and forced to either beg or starve; whereas I eat my own bread! How many lie rotting in gaols and dungeons, or are driven to wander in unknown deserts or amongst people whose knowledge they understand not; whereas I enjoy home and liberty! How many are shrieking under scourges and racks; whereas I sit at ease! And if I shall cast mine eyes upon my spiritual condition, alas, how many do I see sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death; whereas the Sun of Righteousness hath risen to me with healing in his wings! How many lie in a woeful bondage under sin and Satan; whereas my Saviour hath freed me from those hellish chains, and brought me into the glorious liberty of the sons of God! How many are miserably mis-led into the dangerous by-paths of error; whereas he hath graciously kept me in the plain and sure way of his saving truth! If we do not sometimes make these not proud, but thankful comparisons; and look upon ourselves, not with direct beams, but by reflection upon others; we shall never be sensible enough of our own mercies.

XCVIII. The true Christian is in a very happy condition; for no man will envy him, and he can envy nobody. None will envy him, for the world cannot know how happy he is; how happy in the favour of God; how happy in the enjoying of that favour. Those secret delights that he finds in the presence of his God, those comfortable pledges of love and mutual interchanges of blessed interest which pass between them, are not for worldly hearts to conceive; and no man will envy an unknown happiness. On the other side, he cannot envy the world's greatest favourite under heaven; for he well knows how fickle and uncertain that man's felicity is: he sees him walking upon ice, and perceives every foot of his sliding, and threatening a fall; and hears that brittle pavement, at every step, crackling under him, and ready to give way to his swallowing up; and withal finds, if those pleasures of his could be constant and permanent, how poor and unsatisfying they are, and how utterly unable to yield true contentment to the soul. The Christian, therefore, while others look upon him with pity and scorn, laughs secretly to himself in his bosom, as well knowing there is none but he truly happy.

XCIX. It was a high and honourable embassy, whereon the angel Gabriel was sent down to the blessed virgin, that she should be the mother of her Saviour: neither was that inferior, of the glorious angel that brought the joyful tidings of the incarnation and birth of the Son of God to the shepherds of Bethlehem: but a far more happy errand was that which the Lord Jesus, after his resurrection, committed to the Marys: "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God," John xx. 17. Lo, he says not, "I am risen," but "I ascend;" as if he had forgot the earth whence he arose, and thought only on that heaven whither he was going: upon his Easter, his mind is on his Ascension-day. As there had been nothing but discomfort in death, without a resurrection; so there had been little comfort in a resurrection, without an ascension to glory. There is a contentment in the very act, "I ascend:" even nature is ambitious, and we do all affect to mount higher, as to come down

is a death. But this height is, like the ascendant, infinite; "I ascend to my Father:" there was the glory which he put off in his humble incarnation; there was the glory which he was now to resume and possess to all eternity. And, as if nature and adoption could give a like interest, he puts both together; "My Father and your Father; my God and your God." His mercy vouchsafes to style us brethren; yet the distance is immeasurable betwixt him, the Son of his eternal essence, and us, the naturally wretched sons of his gracious election; yet as if both he and we should be co-heirs of the same blessedness, though not in the same measure, he says, "My Father and your Father;" first, my Father; then, yours; and indeed therefore ours, because his: it is in him that we are elected, that we are adopted; without him, God were not only a stranger, but an enemy: it is the Son, that must make us free; it is the Son that must make us sons: if we be his, the Father cannot but be ours. O the unspeakable comfort and happiness of a Christian in respect of his bodily nature! He cannot but say, with Job, to the worm, "Thou art my mother and my sister;" in his spiritual right, God the Son hath here authorized him to say to the Almighty, "Thou art my Father;" and in nature, in regard of our frail and dying condition, willingly say, "I descend to the grave." Faith makes abundant amends in him, and can as cheerfully say, "I ascend to my Father." And what son that is not altogether graceless, would not be glad to go to his father, though it were to a meaner house than his own; and therefore is ready to say, "I will descend to my Father?" How much more, when his many mansions are infinitely glorious, and when all our happiness consists in his blessed presence, must we needs say, with a joy unspeakable and glorious, "I ascend to my Father!"

C. God made man the Lord of his creatures: he made him not a tyrant: he gave the creatures to man for his lawful use, not for his wanton cruelty. Man may therefore exercise his just sovereignty over the beasts of the field, and fowls of the air, and fishes of the sea; not his lawless will, to their needless destruction or torment. Had man made the creature, he could but challenge an

absolute dominion over that work of his hands ; but now that he is only a fellow-creature to the meanest worm, what an insolent usurpation is this so licentiously to domineer over his fellow-dust ! Yea, that great God who gave a being to the creature and therefore hath a full and illimited power over his own workmanship, takes no pleasure to make use of that power to the unnecessary vexation and torture of what he hath made. That all-wise and bountiful Creator who hath put into the hands of man the subordinate dominion over all the store of these inferior elements, hath made the limit of his command, not necessity only, but convenience too : but if man shall go beyond these bounds, and will destroy the creature only because he will, and put it to pain because it is his pleasure, he abuseth his sovereignty to a sinful imperiousness, and shall be accountable for his cruelty. When the apostle, upon occasion of the law for not muzzling the mouth of the ox, asks, “ Doth God take care for oxen ? ” can we think he meant to question the regard that God hath to so useful a creature ? Do we not hear the psalmist say, “ He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens that cry ? ” Do we not hear our Saviour say, that “ not a sparrow falls to the ground without our heavenly Father ? ” And, of how much more value is an ox than many thousands of sparrows ! Is not the speech therefore both comparative and typical ? Is the main care that God takes in that law, for provision to be made for the beast ? and doth he not rather, under that figure, give order for the maintenance of those spiritual oxen that labour in the husbandry of the Almighty ? Doubtless, as even the savage creatures, “ the young lions seek their meat from God,” so they find it from him in due season ; “ He openeth his hand, and filleth every creature with good.” Is God so careful for preserving, and shall man be so licentious in destroying them ? “ A righteous man,” saith Solomon, “ regardeth the life of his beast ; ” he is no better therefore than a wicked man, that regardeth it not. To offer violence to, and to take away the life from, our fellow-creatures without a cause, is no less than tyranny. Surely no other measure should a man offer to his beast, than that which, if his beast, with Balaam’s, could expos-

tulate with him, he could well justify to it; no other than that man, if he had been made a beast, would have been content should have been offered by man to him; no other, than he shall make account to answer to a common Creator. Justly do we smile at the niceness of the foolish Manichees, who made scruples to pull a herb or flower, and were ready to preface apologies and excuses for the reaping of their corn and grinding the grain they fed upon; as if these vegetables were sensible of pain, and capable of our oppression: but surely for those creatures, which, enjoying a sensitive life, forego it with no less anguish and reluctance than ourselves, and would be as willing to live without harm, as their owners; they may well challenge both such mercy and justice at our hands, as that in the usage of them we may approve ourselves to their Maker. Wherein I blush and grieve, to see how far we are exceeded by Turks and infidels, whom mere nature hath taught more tenderness to the poor brute creatures, than we have learned from the holier rules of charitable Christianity. For my part, let me rather affect and applaud the harmless humour of that miscalled saint, who in an indiscreet humility, called every wolf his brother, and every sheep, yea, every ant, his sister; fellowing himself with every thing that had life in it, as well as himself; than the tyrannical disposition of those men, who take pleasure in the abuse, persecution, destruction of their fellow-creatures, upon no other quarrel, than because they live.

THE
DEVOUT SOUL;
OR,
RULES OF HEAVENLY DEVOTION.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT DEVOTION IS.

DEVOTION is the life of religion, the very soul of piety, the highest employment of grace, and no other than the pre-possession of heaven by the saints of God here upon earth : every improvement whereof is of more advantage and value to the Christian soul, than all the profit and contentments which this world can afford it.

There is a kind of art of devotion, if we can attain unto it, whereby the practice thereof may be much advanced. We have known indeed some holy souls, who, out of the general precepts of piety and their own happy experiments of God's mercy, have, through the grace of God, grown to a great measure of perfection this way ; who yet might have been much expedited and completed by those helps, which the greater illumination and experience of others might have afforded them. Like as we see it in other faculties ; there are those who, out of a natural dexterity and their own frequent practice, have got into a safe posture of defence, and have handled their weapon with commendable skill, whom yet the fence-school might have raised to a higher pitch of cunning. As nature is perfected, so grace is not a little furthered by art ; since it pleaseth the wisdom of God to work ordinarily upon the

soul, not by the immediate power of miracle, but in such methods and by such means, as may most conduce to his blessed ends. It is true, that all our good motions come from the Spirit of God; neither is it less true, that all the good counsels of others proceed from the same Spirit; and that good Spirit cannot be cross to itself: he therefore that infuses good thoughts into us, suggests also such directions, as may render us apt both to receive and improve them. If God be bounteous, we may not be idle and neglective of our spiritual aids.

If you tell me, by way of instance in a particular act of devotion, that there is a gift of prayer, and that the Spirit of God is not tied to rules, I yield both these; but withal I must say there are also helps of prayer, and that we must not expect immediate inspirations. I find the world much mistaken in both. They think that man hath the gift of prayer, who can utter the thoughts of his heart roundly unto God, who can express himself smoothly in the phrase of the Holy Ghost, and press God with most proper words and passionate vehemence; and surely this is a commendable faculty, wheresoever it is: but this is not the gift of prayer; you may call it, if you will, the gift of elocution. Do we say that man hath the gift of pleading, who can talk eloquently at the bar; who can, in good terms, loudly and earnestly importune the judge for his client? and not rather he who brings the strongest reason, and quotes his books and precedents with most truth and clearest evidence, so as may convince the jury and persuade the judge? Do we say he hath the gift of preaching, who can deliver himself in a flowing manner of speech to his hearers, who can cite scripture or fathers, who can please his auditory with the flowers of rhetoric? or rather he who can divide the word aright, interpret it soundly, apply it judiciously, put it home to the conscience; speaking in the evidence of the Spirit; powerfully convincing the gainsayers; comforting the dejected; and drawing every soul nearer to heaven? The like must we say for prayer; the gift whereof he may be truly said to have, not that hath the most rennible tongue, for prayer is not so much a matter of the lips, as of the heart; but he that hath the most illuminated apprehension of the God to whom he speaks,

the deepest sense of his own wants, the most eager longings after grace, the ferventest desires of supplies from heaven, and, in a word, whose heart sends up the strongest groans and cries to the Father of mercies.

Neither may we look for enthusiasms and immediate inspirations, putting ourselves upon God's Spirit in the solemn exercises of our invocation, without heed or meditation; the dangerous inconvenience whereof hath been too often found in the rash and unwarrantable expressions that have fallen from the mouths of unwary suppliants: but we must address ourselves with due preparation to that holy work; we must digest our suits, and fore-order our supplications to the Almighty; so that there may be excellent and necessary use of meet rules of our devotion.

He whose Spirit helps us to pray, and whose lips taught us how to pray, is an all-sufficient example for us. All the skill of men and angels cannot afford a more exquisite model of supplicatory devotion, than that blessed Saviour of ours gave us in the mount; led in by a divine and heart-raising preface, carried out with a strong and heavenly enforcement; wherein an awful compellation makes way for petition, and petition makes way for thanksgiving; the petitions marshalled in a most exact order, for spiritual blessings which have an immediate concernment of God, in the first place; then for temporal favours which concern ourselves, in the second. So punctual a method had not been observed by him that heareth prayer, if it had been all one to him to have had our devotions confused and tumultuary.

There is commonly much mistaking of devotion, as if it were nothing but an act of vocal prayer, expiring with that holy breath, and revived with the next task of our invocation; which is usually measured of many by frequency, length, smoothness of expression, loudness, vehemence: whereas indeed it is rather an habitual disposition of a holy soul, sweetly conversing with God in all the forms of a heavenly, yet awful familiarity; and a constant entertainment of ourselves here below with the God of spirits, in our sanctified thoughts and affections: one of the noble exercises whereof is our access to the throne of grace in our prayers; whereto may be added, the ordering of our

holy attendance upon the blessed word and sacraments of the Almighty.

Nothing hinders therefore, but that a stammering suppliant may reach to a more eminent devotion, than he who can deliver himself in the most fluent and pathetical forms of elocution; and that our silence may be more devout, than our noise.

We shall not need to send you to the cells or cloisters for this skill, although it will hardly be believed how far some of their contemplative men have gone in the theory hereof; perhaps, like as chymists give rules for the attaining of that elixir which they never found; for surely they must needs fail of that perfection they pretend, who are commonly in the object of it, always in the ground of it, which is faith, stripped, by their opinion, of the most comfortable use of it, certainty of application.

As there may be many resemblances betwixt light and devotion, so this one especially, that as there is a light universally diffused through the air, and there is a particular recollection of light into the body of the sun and stars, so it is in devotion—there is a general kind of devotion, that goes through the renewed heart and life of a Christian, which we may term *habitual* and *virtual*; and there is a special and fixed exercise of devotion, which we name *actual*.

CHAPTER II.

REQUISITES TO THE EFFECTUAL PERFORMANCE OF DEVOTION.

THE soul that is rightly affected to God, is never void of a holy devotion. Wherever it is, whatever it doth, it is still lifted up to God, and fastened upon him, and converses with him; ever serving the Lord in fear, and rejoicing in him with trembling.

SECTION I.

The Heart must be settled in a right Apprehension of God.

FOR the effectual performance whereof, it is requisite first, that the heart be settled in a right apprehension of our God, without which our devotion is not thankless only, but sinful.

With much labour therefore, and agitation of a mind illuminated from above, we must find ourselves wrought to a high, awful, adorative, and constant conceit of that incomprehensible Majesty, in whom we live, and move, and are—one God, in three most glorious Persons; infinite in wisdom, in power, in justice, in mercy, in providence, in all that he is, in all that he hath, in all that he doth; dwelling in light inaccessible; attended with thousand thousands of angels: whom yet we neither can know, neither would it avail us if we could, but in the face of the eternal Son of his love, our blessed Mediator, God and Man; who sits at the right-hand of Majesty in the highest heavens: from the sight of whose glorious humanity, we comfortably rise to the contemplation of that infinite Deity whereto it is inseparably united; in and by him made ours by a lively faith, finding our persons and obedience accepted; expecting our full redemption and blessedness. Here, here must our hearts be unremoveably fixed. In his light, must we see light. No cloudy occurrences of this world, no busy employments, no painful sufferings, must hinder us from thus “seeing him that is invisible.”

SECTION II.

The Heart must behold God as really present.

NEITHER doth the devout heart see his God aloof off, as dwelling above in the circle of heaven, but beholds that infinite Spirit really present with him.

“The Lord is upon thy right hand,” saith the psalmist. Our bodily eye doth not more certainly see our own flesh,

than the spiritual eye sees God close by us, yea, in us. A man's own soul is not so intimate to himself, as God is to his soul; neither do we move by him only, but in him.

What a sweet conversation therefore hath the holy soul with his God! What heavenly conferences have they two, which the world is not privy to; while God entertains the soul with the divine motions of his Spirit, the soul entertains God with gracious compliances!

Is the heart heavy with the grievous pressures of affliction? The soul goes to its God, and pours out itself before him in earnest bemoanings and supplications: the God of mercy answers the soul again with seasonable refreshings of comfort.

Is the heart secretly wounded and bleeding with the conscience of some sin? It speedily betakes itself to the great Physician of the soul, who forthwith applies the balm of Gilead for an unfailing and present cure.

Is the heart distracted with doubts? The soul retires to that inward oracle of God for counsel: he returns to the soul a happy settlement of just resolution.

Is the heart deeply affected with the sense of some special favour from his God? The soul breaks forth into the passionate voice of praise and thanksgiving: God returns the pleasing testimony of a cheerful acceptance.

O blessed soul, that hath a God to go unto upon all occasions! O infinite mercy of a God, that vouchsafes to stoop to such entireness with dust and ashes! It was a gracious speech of a worthy divine upon his death-bed, now breathing towards heaven, that he should change his place, not his company. His conversation was now beforehand with his God and his holy angels; the only difference was, that he was now going to a more free and full fruition of the Lord of life, in that region of glory above, whom he had truly, though with weakness and imperfection, enjoyed in this vale of tears.

CHAPTER III.

OF HABITUAL DEVOTION.

Now that these mutual respects may be sure not to cool with intermission, the devout heart takes all occasions both to think of God and to speak to him.

SECTION I.

The Heart takes all Occasions to think of God.

THERE is nothing that he sees, which doth not bring God to his thoughts.

Indeed there is no creature, wherein there are not manifest footsteps of omnipotence, yea, which hath not a tongue to tell us of its Maker. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work: one day telleth another, and one night certifieth another," Ps. xix. 1, 2. "Yea, O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all. The earth is full of thy riches: so is the great and wide sea, where are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts," Ps. civ. 24, 25. Every herb, flower, spire of grass, every twig and leaf, every worm and fly, every scale and feather, every billow and meteor, speaks the power and wisdom of their infinite Creator. Solomon sends the sluggard to the ant; Isaiah sends the Jews to the ox and the ass; our Saviour sends his disciples to the ravens and to the lilies of the field. There is no creature, of whom we may not learn something. We shall have spent our time ill in this great school of the world, if, in such store of lessons, we be non-proficients in devotion.

Vain idolaters make to themselves images of God, whereby they sinfully represent him to their thoughts and adoration. Could they have the wit and grace to see it, God hath taken order to spare them this labour, in that he hath stamped in every creature such impressions of his infinite power, wisdom, goodness, as may give us just occasion to worship and praise him, with a safe and holy advantage to

our souls; for “the invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.”

And indeed wherefore serve all the volumes of natural history, but to be so many commentaries upon the several creatures, wherein we may read God? And even those men, who have not the skill or leisure to peruse them, may yet, out of their own thoughts and observation, raise, from the sight of all the works of God, sufficient matter to glorify him. Who can be so stupid, as not to take notice of the industry of the bee, the providence of the ant, the cunning of the spider, the reviving of the fly, the worm’s endeavour of revenge, the subtlety of the fox, the sagacity of the hedgehog, the innocence and profitableness of the sheep, the laboriousness of the ox, the obsequiousness of the dog, the timorous shifts of the hare, the nimbleness of the deer, the generosity of the lion, the courage of the horse, the fierceness of the tiger, the cheerful music of birds, the harmlessness of the dove, the true love of the turtle, the cock’s observation of time, the swallow’s architecture; shortly, for it were easy here to be endless, of the several qualities and dispositions of every of those our fellow creatures, with whom we converse on the face of the earth? and who that takes notice of them, cannot fetch from every act and motion of theirs, some monition of duty and occasion of devout thoughts?

Surely I fear many of us Christians may justly accuse ourselves, as too neglective of our duty this way; that, having thus long spent our time in this great academy of the world, we have not, by so many silent documents, learned to ascribe more glory to our Creator. I doubt those creatures, if they could exchange their brutality with our reason, being now so docible as to learn of us so far as their sense can reach, would approve themselves better scholars to us, than we have been unto them.

Withal I must add, that the devout soul stands not always in need of such outward monitors, but finds within itself sufficient incitements to raise up itself to a continual minding of God, and makes use of them accordingly; and if at any time, being taken up with importunate occasions of the world, it finds God missing but an hour, it chides

itself for such neglect, and sets itself to recover him with so much more eager affection : as the faithful spouse in the Canticles, when she finds him whom her soul loved, withdrawn from her for a season, put herself into a speedy search after him, and gives not over till she have attained his presence.

SECTION II.

The Heart speaks to God in the Language of Spirits.

Now as these many monitors, both outward and inward, must elevate our hearts very frequently to God, so those raised hearts must not entertain him with a dumb contemplation, but must speak to him in the language of spirits.

All occasions therefore must be taken of sending forth pious and heavenly ejaculations to God. The devout soul may do this more than a hundred times a day, without any hindrance to his special vocation. The housewife at her wheel, the weaver at his loom, the husbandman at his plough, the artificer in his shop, the traveller in his way, the merchant in his warehouse, may thus enjoy God in his busiest employment ; for the soul of man is a nimble spirit, and the language of thoughts need not take up time ; and though we now, for example's sake, clothe them in words, yet in our practice we need not.

Now these ejaculations may be either at *large* or *occasional*.

1. At large ; such as that of old Jacob, " O Lord, I have waited for thy salvation ;" or that of David, " O save me for thy mercy's sake."

And these either in matter of humiliation, or of imploration, or of thanksgiving. In all which we cannot follow a better pattern, than the sweet singer of Israel, whose heavenly conceptions we may either borrow or imitate.

In way of humiliation ; such as these, " Heal my soul, O Lord, for I have sinned against thee," Ps. xli. 4. " O remember not against us former iniquities : let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us, for we are brought very low," lxxix. 8. " If thou wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it ?" cxxx. 3. " Lord, thou

knowest the thoughts of man, that they are but vain," xciv. 11. "O God, why abhorrest thou my soul, and hidest thy face from me?" lxxxviii. 14.

In way of imploration; "Up, Lord, and help me, O God," iii. 7. "O let my heart be sound in thy statutes, that I be not ashamed," cxix. 80. "Lord, where are thy old loving mercies?" lxxxix. 49. "O deliver me; for I am helpless, and my heart is wounded within me," cix. 21, 22. "Comfort the soul of thy servant; for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul," lxxxvi. 4. "Go not far from me, O God," lxxi. 12. "O knit my heart unto thee, that I may fear thy name," lxxxvi. 11. "Thou art my helper and redeemer; O Lord, make no long tarrying," lxx. 5. "O be thou my help in trouble; for vain is the help of man," lx. 11. "O guide me with thy counsel; and after that, receive me into glory," lxxiii. 24. "My time is in thy hand: deliver me from the hands of mine enemies," xxxi. 15. "O withdraw not thy mercy from me, O Lord," xl. 11. "Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness, because of mine enemies," v. 8. "O let my soul live, and it shall praise thee," cxix. 175.

In way of thanksgiving. "O God, wonderful art thou in thy holy places," lxviii. 95. "O Lord, how glorious are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep," xcii. 5. "O God, who is like unto thee?" lxxi. 19. "The Lord liveth! and blessed be my strong helper," xviii. 46. "Lord, thy loving-kindness is better than life itself," lxiii. 3. "All thy works praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints give thanks unto thee," cxlv. 10. "O, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all," civ. 24. "Who is God, but the Lord; and who hath any strength, except our God?" xviii. 31. "We will rejoice in thy salvation, and triumph in thy name, O Lord," xx. 5. "O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness," cvii. 8. "O how plentiful is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee!" xxxi. 19. "Thou, Lord, hast never failed them that seek thee," ix. 10. "In thy presence is the fulness of joy; and at thy right-hand, there is pleasure for evermore," xvi. 11. "Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him?" viii. 4. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us; but unto thy name give the praise," cxv. 1.

2. Occasional ejaculations are such, as are moved upon the presence of some such object, as carries a kind of relation or analogy to that holy thought which we have entertained.

Of this nature I find that which was practised in St. Basil's time, that, upon the lighting of candles, the manner was to bless God in these words, "Praise be to God the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost;" which that father says was anciently used; but who was the author of it, he professeth to be unknown. To the same purpose was the *Lucernarium*, which was a part of the evening office of old; for which there may seem to be more colour of reason, than for the ordinary fashion of apprecation, upon occasion of our sneezing, which is expected and practised by many out of civility: old and reverend Beza was wont to move his hat with the rest of the company, but to say withal, "Gramercy, *Maïam la Superstition.*"

Now howsoever in this or any other practice which may seem to carry with it a smack of superstition, our devotion may be groundless and unseasonable; yet nothing hinders but that we may take just and holy hints of raising up our hearts to our God; as when we first look forth and see the heavens over our heads, to think, "The heavens declare thy glory, O God," Psalm xix. 1: when we see the day breaking, or the sun rising, "The day is thine, and the night is thine; thou hast prepared the light and the sun," lxxiv. 16: when the light shines in our faces, "Thou deckest thyself with light, as with a garment," civ. 2: or, "Light is sown for the righteous," xcvi. 11: when we see our garden embellished with flowers, "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord," xxxiii. 5: when we see a rough sea, "The waves of the sea rage horribly, and are mighty; but the Lord, that dwelleth on high, is mightier than they," xciii. 4: when we see the darkness of the night, "The darkness is no darkness with thee," cxxxix. 12: when we rise up from our bed or our seat, "Lord, thou knowest my down-sitting and my up-rising: thou understandest my thoughts afar off," cxxxix. 1, 2: when we wash our hands, "Wash thou me, O Lord; and I shall be whiter than snow," li. 7: when we are walking

forth, "O, hold thou up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not," xvii. 5: when we hear a passing-bell, "O, teach me to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom," xc. 12: or, "Lord, let me know my end, and the number of my days," xxxix. 4.

Thus may we dart out our holy desires to God upon all occasions. Wherein heed must be taken, that our ejaculations be not, on the one side, so rare, that our hearts grow to be hard and strange to God, but that they may be held on in continual acknowledgment of him and acquaintance with him; and, on the other side, that they be not so over-frequent in their perpetual reiteration, as that they grow to be, like that of the Romish votaries, fashionable; which, if great care be not taken, will fall out, to the utter frustrating of our devotion. Shortly, let the measure of these devout glances be the preserving our hearts in a constant tenderness and godly disposition; which shall be further actuated upon all opportunities by the exercises of our more enlarged and fixed devotion; whereof there is the same variety, that there is in God's services about which it is conversant.

CHAPTER IV.

OF ACTUAL DEVOTION.

THERE are three main businesses, wherein God accounts his service here below to consist. The first is, our address to the throne of grace, and the pouring out of our souls before him in our prayers; the second is, the reading and hearing his most holy word; the third is, the receipt of his blessed sacraments: in all which there is place and use for a SETTLED DEVOTION.

SECTION I.

Of our Address to the Throne of Grace in Prayer.

- I. Prerequisites to which are, that the heart be, 1. clean; 2. clear; 3. humble. II. In the actual exercise of prayer, are to be included, 1. humble confessions of our unworthiness; 2. importunate suing for freedom and rescue; 3. vehement longing after Christ; 4. joyful apprehension and thankful acknowledgment of our deliverance; 5. holy incentives of divine thoughts concerning the means of our freedom and deliverance; 6. union by faith and love to Christ, feeling, effectual, indivisible; 7. unspeakable complacency and delight of the soul in Christ; 8. absolute self-resignation to God; 9. emptying of our souls before God in all our necessities; 10. happy fruition of God in all his favours; 11. cheerful thanksgivings to the God of all comfort.**

To begin with the first work of our actual and enlarged devotion, prayer.

I. Some things are pre-required of us to make us capable of the comfortable performance of so holy and heavenly a duty; namely, that the heart be clean first, and then that it be clear; clean from the defilement of any known sin, clear from all entanglements and distractions.

1. What do we in our prayers, but converse with the Almighty, and either carry our souls up to him, or bring him down to us? Now it is no hoping that we can entertain God in an impure heart. Even we men loath a nasty and sluttish lodging; how much more will the holy God abhor a habitation spiritually filthy! I find, that even the unclean spirit made that a motive of his repossession, that he found "the house swept and garnished," Luke xi. 25. Satan's cleanliness is pollution, and his garnishment disorder and wickedness; without this he finds no welcome. Each spirit looks for an entertainment answerable to his nature; how much more will that God of spirits, who is purity itself, look to be harboured in a cleanly room! "Into a malicious soul wisdom shall not enter;

nor dwell in the body that is subject unto sin;" *Wisd.* i. 4.

What friend would be pleased that we should lodge him in a lazar-house? or who would abide to have a toad lie in his bosom? Surely it is not in the verge of created nature to yield any thing that can be so noisome and odious to the sense of man, as sin is to that absolute and essential Goodness. His pure eyes cannot endure the sight of sin; neither can he endure that the sinner should come within the sight of him. "Away from me, ye wicked," is his charge both here and hereafter.

It is the privilege and happiness of the pure in heart, that they shall see God; see him both in the end and in the way; enjoying the vision of him both in grace and in glory. This is no object for impure eyes.

Descend into thyself therefore, and ransack thy heart, whoever wouldst be a true client of devotion. Search all the close windings of it with the torches of the law of God; and if there be any iniquity found lurking in the secret corners thereof, drag it out and abandon it; and when thou hast done, that thy fingers may retain no pollution, say, with the holy psalmist, "I will wash my hands in innocence: so will I go to thine altar;" *Psalm xxvi. 6.* Presume not to approach the altar of God, there to offer the sacrifice of thy devotion with unclean hands; else thine offering shall be so far from winning an acceptance for thee from the hands of God, as that thou shalt make thine offering abominable. "And if a beast touch the mount, it shall die."

2. As the soul must be clean from sin, so it must be clear and free from distractions.

The intent of our devotion is to welcome God to our hearts; now where shall we entertain him, if the rooms be full, thronged with cares and turbulent passions? The Spirit of God will not endure to be crowded up together with the world in our strait lodgings: a holy vacuity must make way for him in our bosoms. The divine pattern of devotion, in whom the Godhead dwelt bodily, retires into the mount to pray: he that carried heaven with him, would even thus leave the world below him.

Alas, how can we hope to mount up to heaven in our thoughts, if we have the clogs of earthly cares hanging at our heels?

Yea, not only must there be a shutting out of all distractive cares and passions, which are professed enemies to our quiet conversing with God in our devotion, but there must be also a denudation of the mind from all those images of our phantasy, how pleasing soever, that may carry our thoughts aside from those better objects. We are like to foolish children, who, when they should be stedfastly looking on their books, are apt to gaze after every butterfly that passeth by them. Here must be therefore a careful intention of our thoughts, a restraint from all vain and idle roving, and a holding ourselves close to our divine task. While Martha is troubled about many things, her devouter sister, having chosen the better part, plies the one thing necessary which shall never be taken from her; and while Martha would feast Christ with bodily fare, she is feasted of Christ with heavenly delicacies.

3. After the heart is thus cleansed and thus cleared, it must be in the next place decked with true humility, the cheapest, yet best ornament of the soul.

If the wise man tells us, that "pride is the beginning of sin," surely all gracious dispositions must begin in humility. The foundation of all high and stately buildings must be laid low. They are the lowly vallies, that soak in the showers of heaven, which the steep hills shelve off, and prove dry and fruitless. "To this man will I look," saith God, "even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word," Isa. lxvi. 2.

Hence it is, that the more eminent any man is in grace, the more he is dejected in the sight of God. The father of the faithful comes to God under the style of "dust and ashes;" David, under the style of "a worm and no man;" Agur, the son of Jakeh, under the title of "more brutish than any man; and one that hath not the understanding of a man;" John Baptist, "as not worthy to carry the shoes of Christ after him;" Paul, as "the least of saints, and chief of sinners."

On the contrary, the more vile any man is in his own

eyes, and the more dejected in the sight of God, the higher he is exalted in God's favour: like as the conduit-water, by how much lower it falls, the higher it riseth.

When therefore we would appear before God, in our solemn devotions, we must see that we empty ourselves of all proud conceits; and find our hearts fully convinced of our own vileness, yea, nothingness in his sight. Down, down with all our high thoughts: fall we low before our great and holy God; not to the earth only, but to the very brim of hell, in the conscience of our own guiltiness; for though the miserable wretchedness of our nature may be a sufficient cause of our humiliation, yet the consideration of our detestable sinfulness is that which will depress us lowest in the sight of God.

II. It is fit *the exercise of our devotion* should

1. Begin in an humble confession of our unworthiness.

Now for the effectual furtherance of this our self-dejection, it will be requisite to bend our eyes upon a threefold object—to look inward, into ourselves; upward, to heaven; downward, to hell.

First, It will be requisite to turn our eyes into our bosoms, and to take a view, not without a secret self-loathing, of that world of corruption that hath lain hidden there; and thereupon to accuse, arraign, and condemn ourselves, before that awful tribunal of the Judge of heaven and earth, both of that original pollution which we have drawn from the tainted loins of our first parents, and those innumerable actual wickednesses derived therefrom, which have stained our persons and lives. How can we but be thoroughly humbled, to see our souls utterly overspread with the odious and abominable leprosy of sin? We find that Uzziah bore up stoutly awhile against the priests of the Lord, in the maintenance of his sacrilegious presumption; but when he saw himself turned leprosy, on the sudden, he is confounded in himself, and, in a depth of shame, hastens away from the presence of God to a sad and penitential retiredness. We should need no other arguments to loath ourselves, than the sight of our own faces, so miserably deformed with the nasty and hateful scurf of our iniquity.

Neither only must we be content to shame and grieve

3. Hereupon therefore follows a vehement longing, incapable of a denial, after Christ, and fervent aspirations to that Saviour by whom only we receive a full and gracious deliverance from death and hell, and a full pardon and remission of all our sins: and, if this come not the sooner, strong knockings at the gates of heaven, even so loud, that the Father of mercies cannot but hear and open. Never did any contrite soul beg of God, that was not prevented by his mercy; much more doth he condescend, when he is strongly entreated. Our very entreaties are from him; he puts into us those desires which he graciously answers. Now therefore doth the devout soul see the God of all comfort to bow the heavens, and come down with healing in his wings; and hear him speak peace unto the heart thus thoroughly humbled: "Fear not; thou shalt not die, but live. Be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee." He therefore, comes in that divine grace of faith, effectually apprehending Christ the Saviour and his infinite satisfaction and merits; comfortably applying all the sweet promises of the gospel; clinging close to that all sufficient Redeemer; and, in his most perfect obedience, emboldening itself to challenge a freedom of access to God, and confidence of appearance before the tribunal of heaven. And now the soul, clad with Christ's righteousness, dares look God in the face, and can both challenge and triumph over all the powers of darkness: for "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. v. 1.

4. By how much deeper the sense of our misery and danger is, so much more welcome and joyful is the apprehension of our deliverance, and so much more thankful is our acknowledgment of that unspeakable mercy. The soul, therefore, that is truly sensible of this wonderful goodness of its God, as it feels a marvellous joy in itself, so it cannot but break forth into cheerful and holy, though secret gratulations. "The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, long-suffering, and of great goodness: he keepeth not his anger for ever: he hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us after our iniquities," Ps. ciii. 8, 10. "What shall I render unto the Lord, for all his benefits towards me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call

upon the name of the Lord," cxvi. 12, 13. "I will thank thee; for thou hast heard me, and hast not given me over to death; but art become my salvation," cxviii. 18, 21. "O speak good of the Lord, all ye works of his: praise thou the Lord, O my soul," ciii. 22.

5. The more feelingly the soul apprehends, and the more thankfully it digests the favours of God in its pardon and deliverance, the more freely doth the God of mercy impart himself to it; and the more God imparts himself to it, the more it loves him, and the more heavenly acquaintance and entireness grows between God and it. And now that love which was but a spark at first, grows into a flame, and wholly takes up the soul. This fire of heavenly love in the devout soul is and must be heightened more and more, by the addition of the holy incentives of divine thoughts concerning the means of our freedom and deliverance.

And here offers itself to us that bottomless abyss of mercy in our redemption, wrought by the eternal Son of God, Jesus Christ the Just, by whose stripes we are healed, by whose blood we are ransomed; where none will befit us, but admiring and adoring notions.

We shall not disparage you, O ye blessed angels and archangels of heaven, if we shall say, ye are not able to look into the bottom of this divine love, wherewith "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." None, O none can comprehend this mercy, but he that wrought it.

Lord, what a transcendent, what an infinite love is this! What an object was this for thee to love! a world of sinners! impotent, wretched creatures, that had despited thee; that had no motive for thy favour but deformity, misery, professed enmity! It had been mercy enough in thee, that thou didst not damn the world; but that thou shouldest love it, is more than mercy. It was thy great goodness to forbear the acts of just vengeance to the sinful world of man; but to give unto it tokens of thy love, is a favour beyond all expression. The least gift from thee had been more than the world could hope for; but that thou shouldst not stick to give thine only begotten Son, the Son of thy love, the Son of thine essence, thy co-equal, co-eter-

nal Son, who was more than ten thousand worlds, to redeem this one forlorn world of sinners, is love above all comprehension of men and angels. What diminution had it been to thee and thine essential glory, O thou great God of heaven, that the souls that sinned should have died and perished everlastingly? yet so infinite was thy loving mercy, that thou wouldest rather give thine only Son out of thy bosom, than that there should not be a redemption for believers.

Yet, O God, hadst thou sent down thy Son to this lower region of earth upon such terms, as that he might have brought down heaven with him; that he might have come in the port and majesty of a God, clothed with celestial glory, to have dazzled our eyes and to have drawn all hearts unto him; this might have seemed, in some measure, to have sorted with his divine magnificence; but thou wouldest have him to appear in the wretched condition of our humanity. Yet even thus, hadst thou sent him into the world in the highest estate and pomp of royalty that earth could afford; that all the kings and monarchs of the world should have been commanded to follow his train and to glitter in his court; and that the knees of all the potentates of the earth should have bowed to his sovereign majesty, and their lips have kissed his dust; this might have carried some kind of appearance of a state next to divine greatness: but thou wouldest have him come in the despised form of a servant.

And thou, O blessed Jesu, wast accordingly willing, for our sakes, to submit thyself to nakedness, hunger, thirst, weariness, temptation, contempt, betraying, agonies, scorn, buffetings, scourgings, distention, crucifixion, death. O love, above measure, without example, beyond admiration! "Greater love," thou sayest, "hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;" but O what is it then, that thou who wert God and man, shouldest lay down thy life, more precious than many worlds, for thine enemies!

Yet had it been but the laying down of a life in a fair and gentle way, there might have been some mitigation of the sorrow of a dissolution. There is not more difference betwixt life and death, than there may be betwixt some

one kind of death and another. Thine, O dear Saviour, was the painful, shameful, cursed death of the cross; wherein yet all that man could do unto thee was nothing to that inward torment, which, in our stead, thou enduredst from thy Father's wrath; when, in the bitterness of thine anguished soul, thou criedst out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Even thus, thus was thou content to be forsaken, that we wretched sinners might be received to mercy. O love, stronger than death which thou vanquishedst! more high than that hell is deep, from which thou hast rescued us!

6. The sense of this infinite love of God cannot choose but ravish the soul; and cause it to go out of itself into that Saviour who hath wrought so mercifully for it; so as it may be nothing in itself, but what it hath, or is, may be Christ's. By the sweet powers therefore of faith and love, the soul finds itself united unto Christ feelingly, effectually, indivisibly; so as that it is not to be distinguished betwixt the acts of both. "To me to live is Christ," saith the blessed apostle; and, elsewhere, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life, which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me," Gal. ii. 20. "My beloved is mine, and I am his," saith the spouse of Christ in her bridal song. O blessed union, next to the hypostatical, whereby the human nature of the Son of God is taken into the participation of the eternal Godhead!

7. Out of the sense of this happy union, ariseth an unspeakable complacency and delight of the soul in that God and Saviour who is thus inseparably ours, and by whose union we are blessed; and a high appreciation of him above all the world; and a contemptuous under-valuation of all earthly things in comparison of him.

And this is no other, than a heavenly reflection of that sweet contentment which the God of mercies takes in the faithful soul. "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes," Cant. iv. 9. "Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah; comely as Jerusalem. Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me," vi. 4, 5. "How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! How much better is thy

love, than wine ; and the smell of thine ointments better, than all spices !" iv. 10. And the soul answers him again in the same language of spiritual dearness : " My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand," v. 10. " Set me as a seal upon thy heart ; as a seal upon thine arm : for love is as strong as death," viii. 6. and, as in an ecstatical qualm of passionate affection, " Stay me with flaggons, and comfort me with apples ; for I am sick of love," ii. 5.

8. Upon this gracious complacency, will follow an absolute self-resignation, or giving up of ourselves into the hands of that good God whose we are, and who is ours ; and an humble contentedness with his good pleasure in all things ; looking upon God with the same face, whether he smile upon us in his favours, or chastise us with his loving corrections. If he speak good unto us. " Behold the servant of the Lord ; be it unto me according to thy word : " if evil, " It is the Lord ; let him do whatsoever he will." Here is therefore a cheerful acquiescence in God, and a hearty reliance and casting ourselves upon the mercy of so bountiful a God, who, having given us his Son, can in and with him deny us nothing.

9. Upon this subacted disposition of heart, will follow a familiar, yet awful compellation of God, and an emptying of our souls before him in all our necessities ; for that God who is infinitely merciful, will not have his favours otherwise conveyed to us, than by our supplications. The style of his dear ones is, " His people that prayeth ; " and his own style is, " The God that heareth prayer." To him therefore doth the devout heart pour out all its requests with all true humility, with all fervour of spirit ; as knowing that God will hear neither proud prayers nor heartless.

Wherein its holy desires are regulated by a just method ; suing first for spiritual favours, as most worthy ; then for temporal, as the appendances of better ; and, in both, aiming at the glory of our good God more than our own advantage. And in the order of spiritual things, first and most for those that are most necessary and essential for our soul's health ; then for secondary graces that concern the prosperity and comfort of our spiritual life ; absolutely craving those graces that accompany salvation ; all others

conditionally, and with reference to the good pleasure of the munificent Giver.

Wherein heed must be taken, that our thoughts be not so much taken up with our expressions, as with our desires; and that we do not suffer ourselves to languish into an unfeeling length and repetition of our suits. Even the hands of a Moses may in time grow heavy; so therefore must we husband our spiritual strength, that our devotion may not flag with over-tiring, but may be most vigorous at the last. And as we must enter into our prayers not without preparatory elevations, so must we be careful to take a meet leave of God at their shutting up; following our supplications with the pause of a faithful and most lowly adoration, and, as it were, sending up our hearts into heaven to see how our prayers are taken; and raising them to a joyful expectation of a gracious and successful answer from the Father of mercies.

10. Upon the comfortable feeling of a gracious condescendence, follows a happy fruition of God in all his favours; so as we have not them, so much as God in them; which advanceth their worth a thousand fold, and, as it were, brings down heaven upon us. Whereas therefore the sensual man rests only in the mere use of any blessing, as health, peace, prosperity, knowledge, and reacheth no higher; the devout soul, in and through all these, sees and feels a God that sanctifies them to him, and enjoys therein his favour that is better than life. Even we men are wont, out of our good nature, to esteem a benefit not so much for its own worth, as for the love and respect of the giver: small legacies, for this cause, find dear acceptance: how much more is it so betwixt God and the devout soul! It is the sweet apprehension of this love, that makes all his gifts blessings. Do we not see some vain churl, though cried down by the multitude, herein secretly applauding himself, that he hath bags at home? How much more shall the godly man find comfort against all the crosses of the world, that he is possessed of him that possesseth all things, even God all-sufficient; the pledges of whose infinite love he feels, in all the whole course of God's dealing with him!

11. Out of the true sense of this inward fruition of God, the devout soul breaks forth into cheerful thanksgivings to the God of all comfort; praising him for every evil that it is free from, for every good thing that it enjoyeth; for, as it keeps a just inventory of all God's favours, so it often spreads them thankfully before him, and lays them forth, so near as it may, in the full dimensions; that so God may be no loser by him in any act of his beneficence.

Here therefore every of God's benefits must come into account, whether eternal or temporal, spiritual or bodily, outward or inward, public or private, positive or private, past or present, upon ourselves or others: in all which, he shall humbly acknowledge both God's free mercy and his own shameful unworthiness; setting off the favours of his good God the more, with the foil of his own confessed wretchedness and unanswerableness to the least of his mercies.

Now as there is an infinite variety of blessings from the liberal hand of the Almighty, so there is great difference in their degrees; for whereas there are three subjects of all the good we are capable of, the estate, body, soul, and each of these does far surpass other in value, the soul being infinitely more worth than the body, and the body far more precious than the outward estate; so the blessings that appertain to them, in several, differ in their true estimation accordingly. If either we do not highly magnify God's mercy for the least, or shall set as high a prize upon the blessings that concern our estate as those that pertain to the body, or upon bodily favours as upon those that belong to the soul, we shall shew ourselves very unworthy and unequal partakers of the divine bounty. But it will savour too much of earth, if we be more affected with temporal blessings, than with spiritual and eternal. By how much nearer relation then any favour hath to the Fountain of goodness, and by how much more it conduceth to the glory of God and ours in him, so much higher place should it possess in our affection and gratitude.

No marvel therefore if the devout heart be raised above itself, and transported with heavenly raptures, when, with Stephen's eyes, it beholds the Lord Jesus standing at the

right-hand of God ; fixing itself upon the consideration of the infinite merits of his life, death, resurrection, ascension, intercession ; and finding itself swallowed up in the depth of that divine love, from whence all mercies flow into the soul ; so as that it runs over with passionate thankfulness, and is therefore deeply affected with all other his mercies, because they are derived from that boundless ocean of divine goodness.

Unspeakable is the advantage that the soul raises to itself, by this continual exercise of thanksgiving ; for the grateful acknowledgment of favours, is the way to more. Even amongst men whose hands are short and strait, this is the means to pull on further beneficence : how much more from the God of all consolation, whose largest bounty diminisheth nothing of his store !

And herein the devout soul enters into its heavenly task : beginning upon earth those hallelujahs which it shall perfect above in the blessed choir of saints and angels, ever praising God, and saying, “ Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever.” Amen.

SECTION II.

Of Reading and Hearing God's Word.

- I. *In reading, we must, 1. come to God's book with holy reverence ; 2. seriously weigh and carefully lay up every clause ; 3. shut up in the ejaculations of our Thanksgiving.*—II. *In hearing, 1. we must prepare by meditation, by prayer ; 2. in the act, devotion calls us to reverence, attention, application ; 3. after hearing, we must chew our food by memory, concoct it by meditation, and disperse it by conference and practice.*

NONE of all the services of God can be acceptably, no, not unsinfully performed, without due devotion. As therefore in our prayers and thanksgivings, so in the other exercises of divine worship, especially in the reading and hearing of God's word, and in our receipt of the blessed sacrament, it is so necessary, that without it, we offer to

God a mere carcass of religious duty, and profane that sacred name we would pretend to honour.

I. In *reading*, we must

1. First, come to God's book, not without a holy reverence, as duly considering both what and whose it is; even no other than the word of the ever-living God, by which we shall once be judged. Great reason have we therefore to make a difference betwixt it and the writings of the holiest men; even no less than betwixt the authors of both. God is true, yea, truth itself: and that which David said in his haste, St. Paul says in full deliberation, "Every man is a liar," Ps. cxvi. 11; Rom. iii. 4.

Before we put our hand to this sacred volume, it will be requisite to elevate our hearts to that God whose it is, for both his leave and his blessing. "Open thou mine eyes," saith the sweet singer of Israel, "that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law," Ps. cxix. 18. Lo, David's eyes were open before to other objects, but when he comes to God's book, he can see nothing without a new act of apertion: letters he might see, but wonders he could not see, till God did uncloset his eyes, and enlighten them. It is not therefore for us presumptuously to break in upon God, and to think, by our natural abilities, to wrest open the precious caskets of the Almighty, and to fetch out all his hidden treasure thence at pleasure; but we must come tremblingly before him, and in all humility crave his gracious admission.

I confess, I find some kind of envy in myself, when I read of those scrupulous observances of high respects given by the Jews to the book of God's law; and when I read of a Romish saint, that never read the scripture but upon his knees; and compare it with the careless neglect, whereof I can accuse myself, and perhaps some others. Not that we should rest in the formality of outward ceremonies of reverence, wherein it were more easy to be superstitious, than devout; but that our outward deportment may testify and answer the awful disposition of our hearts.

Whereto we shall not need to be excited, if we be thoroughly persuaded of the divine original and authority of that sacred word. It was motive enough to the Ephesians

zealously to plead for and religiously to adore the image of their Diana, that it was "the image that fell down from Jupiter." Believe we and know, that the scripture is inspired by God, and we can entertain it with no other than an awful address; and we cannot be Christians, if we do not so believe.

2. Every clause therefore of that God-inspired volume must be as reverently received by us, so seriously weighed and carefully laid up, as knowing that there is no tittle there without its use. What we read, we must labour to understand; what we cannot understand, we must admire silently and modestly enquire of. There are plain truths, and there are deep mysteries. The bounty of God hath left this well of living-water open for all; what runs over is for all comers, but every one hath not wherewith to draw. There is no Christian that may not enjoy God's book, but every Christian may not interpret it. Those shallow fords that are in it, may be waded by every passenger; but there are deeps, wherein he that cannot swim may drown. "How can I without a guide?" said that Ethiopian eunuch. Wherefore serves the tongue of the learned, but to direct the ignorant? Their modesty is of no less use, than the others' skill. It is a woeful condition of a church when no man will be ignorant.

What service can our eyes do us in the ways of God, without our thoughts? Our diligent and frequent reading, therefore, must be attended with our holy meditation. We feed on what we read, but we digest only what we meditate of. What is in our Bible is God's, but that which is in our hearts, is our own. By all which our care must be, not so much to become wiser, as to become better, labouring still to reduce all things to godly practice.

3. Finally, as we enter into this task with the lifting up of our hearts for a blessing, so we shut it up in the ejaculations of our thanksgiving to that God who hath blessed us with the free use of his word.

II. Our eye is our best guide to God, our Creator; but our ear is it that leads us to God, our Redeemer. "How shall they believe, except they hear?" Which that we may effectually do, our devotion suggests unto us some duties before the act; some, in the act; some, after the act.

1. It is the apostle's charge, that we should be "swift to hear;" but heed must be taken, that we make not more haste than good speed. We may not be so forward, as not to look to our foot when we go to the house of God; lest if we be too ready to hear, we offer the sacrifice of fools. What are the feet of the soul, but our affections? If these be not set right, we may easily stumble and wrench at God's threshold. Rash actions can never hope to prosper. As therefore to every great work, so to this there is a due preparation required; and this must be done by meditation first, then by prayer.

Our meditation, first, sequesters the heart from the world, and shakes off those distractive thoughts which may carry us away from these better things. For what room is there for God, where the world hath taken up the lodging? "We cannot serve God and mammon."

Then, secondly, it seizes upon the heart for God; fixing our thoughts upon the great business we go about; recalling the greatness of that Majesty into whose presence we enter, and the main importance of the service we are undertaking; and examining our intentions, wherewith we address ourselves to the work intended. "I am now going to God's house: wherefore do I go thither? Is it to see or to be seen? Is it to satisfy my own curiosity in hearing what the preacher will say? Is it to satisfy the law that requires my presence? Is it to please others' eyes, or to avoid their censures? Is it for fashion? Is it for recreation? Or is it with a sincere desire to do my soul good in gaining more knowledge, in quickening my affections? Is it in a desire to approve myself to my God in the conscience of my humble obedience to his command, and my holy attendance upon his ordinance?" And where we find our ends amiss, chiding and rectifying our obliquities; where just and right, prosecuting them towards a further perfection.

Which, that it may be done, our meditation must be seconded by our prayers. It is an unholy rudeness to press into the presence of that God whom we have not invoked. Our prayer must be, that God would yet more prepare us for the work, and sanctify us to it, and bless us in it; that he would remove our sins; that he would send down

his Spirit into our hearts, which may enable us to this great service ; that he would bless the preacher in the delivery of his sacred message ; that he would be pleased to direct his messenger's tongue to the meeting with our necessities ; that he would free our hearts from all prejudices and distractions ; that he would keep off all temptations which might hinder the good entertainment and success of his blessed word ; finally, that he would make us truly teachable, and his ordinance the power of God to our salvation.

2. In the act of hearing, devotion calls us to reverence, attention, application.

It calls us to reverence to that great God, who speaks to us by the mouth of a weak man ; for in what is spoken from God's chair agreeable to the scriptures, the sound is man's, the substance of the message is God's. Even an Eglon, when he hears of a message from God, riseth out of his seat ; Judges iii. 20. It was not St. Paul's condition only, but of all his faithful servants, to whom he hath committed the word of reconciliation : they are " ambassadors for Christ ;" as if God did beseech us by them, they pray us, " in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God," 2 Cor. v. 20. The embassy is not the bearer's, but the king's ; and if we do not acknowledge the great King of heaven in the voice of the gospel, we cannot but incur a contempt. When therefore we see God's messenger in his pulpit, our eye looks at him, as if it said with Cornelius, " We are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God," Acts x. 33. Whence cannot but follow, together with an awful disposition of mind, a reverent deportment of the body ; which admits not a wild and roving eye, a drowsy head, a chatting tongue, a rude and indecent posture ; but composes itself to such a site, as may best befit a pious soul in so religious an employment. Neither do we come as authorized judges to sit upon the preacher ; but as humble disciples to sit at his feet.

Reverence cannot but draw on attention. We need not be bidden to hang on the lips of him whom we honour. It is the charge of the Spirit, " Let him that hath an ear, hear : " every one hath not an ear ; and of those that have an ear, every one heareth not. The soul hath an ear, as well as the body : if both these ears do not meet together

in one act, there is no hearing. Common experience tells us, that when the mind is otherwise taken up, we do no more hear what a man says, than if we had been deaf or be silent. Hence is that first request of Abigail to David, "Let thy handmaid speak to thine ears; and hear the words of thy handmaid," 1 Sam. xxv. 24: and Job so importunately urgeth his friends, "Hear diligently my speech and my declaration with your ears," Job xiii. 17. The outward ear may be open, and the inward shut: if way be not made through both, we are deaf to spiritual things. "Mine ear hast thou bored, or digged," saith the psalmist: the Vulgate reads it, "Mine ears hast thou perfected," Ps. xl. 6. Surely our ears are grown up with flesh; there is no passage for a perfect hearing of the voice of God, till he have made it by a spiritual perforation. And now that the ear is made capable of good counsel, it doth as gladly receive it; taking in every good lesson, and longing for the next: like unto the dry and chopped earth, which soaks in every silver drop that falls from the clouds, and thirsteth for more, not suffering any of that precious liquor to fall beside it.

Neither doth the devout man care to satisfy his curiosity, as hearing, only that he might hear; but reduces all things to a saving use, bringing all he hears home to his heart by a self-reflecting application; like a practiser of the art of memory, referring every thing to its proper place. If it be matter of comfort; "There is for my sick-bed; there, for my outward losses; there, for my drooping under afflictions; there, for the sense of my spiritual desertions." If matter of doctrine; "There is for my settlement in such a truth; there, for the conviction of such an error; there, for my direction in such a practice." If matter of reproof, he doth not point at his neighbour, but deeply chargeth himself; "This meets with my dead-heartedness and security; this, with my worldly-mindedness; this, with my self-love, and flattery of mine own estate; this, with my uncharitable censoriousness; this, with my foolish pride of heart; this, with my hypocrisy; this with my neglect of God's services and my duty." Thus, in all the variety of the holy passages of the sermon, the devout mind is taken up with digesting what it hears; and working itself

to a secret improvement of all the good counsel that is delivered ; neither is ever more busy, than when it sits still at the feet of Christ.

I cannot therefore approve the practice, which yet I see commonly received, of those who think it no small argument of their devotion, to spend their time of hearing in writing large notes from the mouth of the preacher ; which, however it may be a help for memory in the future, yet cannot, as I conceive, but be some prejudice to our present edification ; neither can the brain get so much hereby, as the heart loseth. If it be said, that, by this means, an opportunity is given for a full rumination of wholesome doctrines afterwards, I yield it ; but withal I must say, that our after-thoughts can never do the work so effectually, as when the lively voice sounds in our ears and beats upon our heart ; but herein I submit my opinion to better judgments.

3. The food that is received into the soul by the ear, is afterwards chewed in the mouth thereof by memory, concocted in the stomach by meditation, and dispersed into the parts by conference and practice.

True devotion finds the greatest part of the work behind. It was a just answer, that John Gerson reports, given by a Frenchman, who being asked by one of his neighbours if the sermon were done, " No," saith he ; " it is said, but it is not done ; neither will be, I fear, in haste." What are we the better, if we hear and remember not ? if we be such auditors, as the Jews were wont to call sieves, that retain no moisture that is poured into them ? What the better, if we remember, but think not seriously of what we hear ; or if we practise not carefully what we think of ? Not that which we hear, is our own ; but that which we carry away.

Although all memories are not alike ; one receives more easily, another retains longer. It is not for every one to hope to attain to that ability, that he can go away with the whole fabric of a sermon, and readily recount it unto others ; neither doth God require that of any man, which he hath not given him. Our desires and endeavours may not be wanting, where our powers fail. It will be enough for weak memories, if they can so lay up those wholesome

counsels which they receive, as that they may fetch them forth, when they have occasion to use them; and that what they want in the extent of memory, they supply in the care of their practice.

Indeed that is it wherein lies the life of all religious duties; and without which, they are but idle formalities. That which the philosopher said of all virtue, I must say of true godliness, that it consists in action. Our Saviour did not say, "Blessed are ye, if ye know these things;" but, "If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them." The end of our desire of the sincere milk of the gospel, is that we may "grow thereby" in the stature of all grace, unto "the fulness of God," 1 Pet. ii. 2; Eph. iii. 19.

SECTION III.

Of Receiving the blessed Sacraments.

In our receipt of the blessed sacraments, are required,
 I. *The graces of 1. faith; 2. charity.* II. *Holy predispositions; 1. hungering and thirsting after the means of salvation; 2. a renewed act of true thankfulness.* III. *Hearty resolves and desires to walk worthy of the Lord Jesus.* IV. *A digestion of this celestial food by holy meditation.*

THE highest of all God's services are his sacraments, which therefore require the most eminent acts of our devotion.

The sacrament of initiation, which, in the first planting of a church, is administered only to those of riper age and understanding, calls for all possible reverence and religious addresses of the receivers; wherein the primitive times were punctually observant, both for substance and ceremony: now in a settled and perpetuated church, in which the virtue of the covenant descends from the parent to the child, there seems to be no use of our preparatory directions; only it is fit, that our devotion should call our eyes back to what we have done in our infancy, and whereto we are ever obliged; that our full age may care-

fully endeavour to make our word good, and may put us in mind of our sinful failings.

That other sacrament of our spiritual nourishment, which our Saviour, as his farewell, left us for a blessed memorial of his death and passion, can never be celebrated with enough devotion.

Far be it from us to come to this feast of our God in our common garments; the soul must be trimmed up, if we would be meet guests for the Almighty. The great Master of the feast will neither abide us to come naked, nor ill clad. Away therefore, first, with the old beastly rags of our wonted corruptions. Due examination comes in first, and thoroughly searches the soul, and finds out all the secret nastiness and defilements that it hides within it; and, by the aid of true penitence, strips it of all those loathsome clouts wherewith it was polluted. Sin may not be clothed upon with grace. Joshua's filthy garments must be plucked off, ere he can be capable of precious robes; Zech. iii. 4. Here may be no place for our sinful lusts, for our covetous desires, for our natural infidelity, for our malicious purposes, for any of our unhallowed thoughts.

The soul, clearly divested of these and all other known corruptions, must, in the next place, instead thereof, be furnished with such graces and holy pre-dispositions, as may fit it for so heavenly a work.

I. Amongst the *graces requisite*,

1. Faith justly challengeth the first place, as that which is both most eminent, and necessarily presupposed to the profitable receipt of this sacrament; for whereas the main end of this blessed banquet is the strengthening of our faith, how should that receive strength, which hath not being? To deliver these sacred viands to an unbeliever, is to put meat into the mouth of a dead man. Now therefore must the heart raise up itself to new acts of believing; and must lay faster hold on Christ, and bring him closer to the soul; more strongly applying to itself the infinite merits of his most perfect obedience, and of his bitter death and passion; and erecting itself to a desire and expectation of a more vigorous and lively apprehension of its omnipotent Redeemer. Neither can this faith be either

dead or solitary, but is still really operative, and attended, as with other graces, so especially with a serious repentance ; whose wonderful power is to undo our former sins, and to mould the heart and life to a better obedience ; a grace so necessary, that the want of it, as in extreme corruption of the stomach, turns the wholesome food of the soul into poison. An impenitent man therefore, coming to God's board, is so far from benefiting himself, as that he eats his own judgment. Stand off from this holy table, all ye that have not made your peace with your God, or that harbour any known sin in your bosom. Not to eat is uncomfortable ; but to eat in such a state, is deadly. Yet rest not in this plea, that ye cannot come because ye are unreconciled ; but as ye love your souls, be reconciled that you may come.

2. Another grace necessarily prerequired is charity to our brethren, and readiness to forgive ; for this is a communion, as with Christ the head, so with all the members of his mystical body. This is the true love-feast of God our Saviour, wherein we profess ourselves inseparably united both to him and his. If there be more hearts than one at God's table, he will not own them. These holy elements give us an emblem of ourselves : this bread is made up of many grains, incorporated into one mass ; and this wine is the confluent juice of many clusters ; neither do we partake of several loaves or variety of liquors, but all eat of one bread and drink of one cup. Here is then no place for rancour and malice ; none, for secret grudgings and heart-burnings. " Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift, and go thy way : first, be reconciled to thy brother ; and then come and offer thy gift," Matt. v. 23, 24. Neither may we do as those two emulous commanders of Greece did, who resolved to leave their spite behind them at mount Athos, and to take it up again on their return : here must be an absolute and free acquitting of all the back-reckonings of our unkindness, that we may receive the God of peace into a clear bosom.

II. Besides these graces, there are certain *holy predispositions* so necessary, that without them our souls can

never hope to receive true comfort in this blessed sacrament.

1. Whereof the first is a hungering and thirsting desire after these gracious means of our salvation. What good will our meat do us without an appetite? Surely without it there is no expectation of either relish or digestion. As therefore those that are invited to some great feast, care first to feed their hunger ere they feed their body, labouring by exercise to get a stomach ere they employ it; so it concerns us to do here: and as those that are listless and weak stomached, are wont to whet their appetite with sharp sauces, so must we, by the tart applications of the law, quicken our desires of our Saviour here exhibited. Could we but see our sins and our miseries by sin, could we see God frowning and hell gaping wide to swallow us, we should not need to be bidden to long for our Deliverer, and every pledge of his favour would be precious to us.

2. Upon the apprehension of our need of a Saviour, and so happy a supply thereof presented unto us, must needs follow a renewed act of true thankfulness of heart to our good God, that hath both given us his dear Son to work our redemption, and his blessed sacrament to seal up unto us our redemption, thus wrought and purchased.

And with souls thus thankfully elevated unto God, we approach, with all reverence, to that heavenly table, where God is both the feast-master and the feast. What intention of holy thoughts, what fervour of spirit, what depth of devotion, must we now find in ourselves! Doubtless out of heaven no object can be so worthy to take up our hearts.

What a clear representation is here of the great work of our redemption! How is my Saviour, by all my senses, here brought home to my soul! How is his passion lively acted before mine eyes! for lo, my bodily eye doth not more truly see bread and wine, than the eye of my faith sees the body and blood of my dear Redeemer: thus, was his sacred body torn and broken: thus, was his precious blood poured out for me. My sins, wretched man that I am! helped thus to crucify my Saviour; and for the discharge of my sins, would he be thus crucified.

Neither did he only give himself for me upon the cross;

but lo, he both offers and gives himself to me in this his blessed institution.

What had this general gift been without this application? Now, my hand doth not more sensibly take, nor my mouth more really eat this bread, than my soul doth spiritually receive and feed on the bread of life. O Saviour, thou art the living bread that came down from heaven. Thy flesh is meat indeed, and thy blood is drink indeed. O that I may so eat of this bread, that I may live for ever! He that cometh to thee, shall never hunger; he that believeth in thee, shall never thirst. O that I could now so hunger and so thirst for thee, that my soul could be for ever satisfied with thee! Thy people of old were fed with manna in the wilderness, yet they died: that food of angels could not keep them from perishing: but O for the hidden manna which giveth life to the world, even thy blessed self! Give me ever of this bread, and my soul shall not die, but live.

O the precious juice of the fruit of the vine, wherewith thou refreshest my soul! Is this the blood of the grape? Is it not rather thy blood of the new testament, that is poured out for me? Thou speakest, O Saviour, of new wine that thou wouldest drink with thy disciples in thy Father's kingdom; can there be any more precious and pleasant, than this wherewith thou cheerest the believing soul? Our palate is now dull and earthly, which shall then be exquisite and celestial; but surely no liquor can be of equal price or sovereignty with thy blood. O how unsavoury are all earthly delicacies to this heavenly draught! O God, let not the sweet taste of this spiritual nectar ever go out of the mouth of my soul. Let the comfortable warmth of this blessed cordial ever work upon my soul, even till and in the last moment of my dissolution.

Dost thou bid me, O Saviour, do this in remembrance of thee? O, how can I forget thee? How can I enough celebrate thee, for this thy unspeakable mercy? Can I see thee thus crucified before my eyes, and for my sake thus crucified, and not remember thee? Can I find my sins accessory to this thy death, and thy death meritoriously expiating all these my grievous sins, and not remember

thee? Can I hear thee freely offering thyself to me, and feel thee graciously conveying thyself into my soul, and not remember thee? I do remember thee, O Saviour; but O that I could yet more effectually remember thee, with all the passionate affections of a soul sick of thy love, with all zealous desires to glorify thee, with all fervent longings after thee and thy salvation! I remember thee in thy sufferings; O do thou remember me in thy glory.

III. Having thus busied itself with holy thoughts in the time of the celebration, the devout soul breaks not off in an abrupt unmannerliness, without taking leave of the great Master of this heavenly feast; but with a secret adoration, humbly blesseth God for so great a mercy, and *heartily resolves and desires to walk worthy of the Lord Jesus* whom it hath received; and to consecrate itself wholly to the service of him that hath so dearly bought it, and hath given it these pledges of its eternal union with him.

IV. The devout soul hath thus supped in heaven, and returns home; yet the work is not thus done: after the elements are out of eye and use, there remains *a digestion of this celestial food by holy meditation.*

And now it thinks, O, what a blessing have I received to day! no less than my Lord Jesus with all his merits; and in and with him, the assurance of the remission of all sins and everlasting salvation. How happy am I, if I be not wanting to God and myself! How unworthy shall I be, if I do not strive to answer this love of my God and Saviour, in all hearty affection and in all holy obedience!

And now, after this heavenly repast, how do I feel myself? What strength, what advantage hath my faith gotten? How much am I nearer to heaven, than before? How much faster hold have I taken of my blessed Redeemer? How much more firm and sensible is my interest in him?

Neither are these thoughts and this examination the work of the next instant only; but they are such as must dwell upon the heart, and must often solicit our memory, and excite our practice; that, by this means, we may frequently renew the efficacy of this blessed sacrament, and our souls may batten more and more with this spiritual nourishment, and may be fed up to eternal life.

SECTION IV.

Specialties of Devotion.

THESE are the generalities of our devotion, which are of common use to all Christians. There are besides these, certain specialties of it, applicable to several occasions, times, places, persons ; for there are morning and evening devotions ; devotions proper to our board, to our closet, to our bed, to God's day, to our own, to health, to sickness, to several callings, to recreations, to the way, to the field, to the church, to our home, to the student, to the soldier, to the magistrate, to the minister, to the husband, wife, child, servant, to our own persons, to our families : the severalties whereof, as they are scarce finite for number, so are most fit to be left to the judgment and holy managing of every Christian : neither is it to be imagined, that any soul which is taught of God and hath any acquaintance with heaven, can be to seek in the particular application of common rules to his own necessity or expedience.

SECTION V.

Recapitulation.

THE result of all is, a devout man is he that ever sees the Invisible, and ever trembleth before that God he sees ; that walks ever here on earth with the God of heaven, and still adores that Majesty with whom he converses ; that confers hourly with the God of spirits in his own language, yet so as no familiarity can abate of his awe, nor fear abate ought of his love ; to whom the gates of heaven are ever open, that he may go in at pleasure to the throne of grace, and none of the angelical spirits can offer to challenge him of too much boldness ; whose eyes are well acquainted with those heavenly guardians, the presence of whom he doth as truly acknowledge, as if they were his sensible companions. He is well known of the King of glory for a daily suitor in the court of heaven ; and none so welcome

there as he. He accounts all his time lost, that falls beside his God; and can be no more weary of good thoughts, than of happiness.

His bosom is no harbour for any known evil, and it is a question whether he more abhors sin or hell. His care is to entertain God in a clear and free heart, and therefore he thrusts the world out of doors, and humbly beseeches God to welcome himself to his own. He is truly dejected and vile in his own eyes; nothing, but hell, is lower than he; every of his slips are heinous; every trespass is aggravated to rebellion. The glory and favours of God heighten his humiliation. He hath looked down to the bottomless deep, and seen with horror what he deserved to feel everlastingly. His cries have been as strong, as his fears just; and he hath found mercy more ready to rescue him, than he could be importunate. His hand could not be so soon put forth, as his Saviour's, for deliverance.

The sense of this mercy hath raised him to an unspeakable joy, to a most fervent love of so dear a Redeemer. That love hath knit his heart to so meritorious a Deliverer, and wrought a blessed union betwixt God and his soul. That union can no more be severed from an infinite delight, than that delight can be severed from an humble and cheerful acquiescence in his munificent God. And now, as in a heavenly freedom, he pours out his soul into the bosom of the Almighty in all faithful suits for himself and others: so he enjoys God in the blessings received, and returns all zealous praises to the Giver.

He comes reverently to the oracles of God, and brings not his eye, but his heart with him; not carelessly negligent in seeking to know the revealed will of his Maker, nor too busily inquisitive into his deep counsels; not too remiss in the letter, nor too peremptory in the sense; gladly comprehending what he may, and admiring what he cannot comprehend.

Doth God call for his ear? He goes awfully into the holy presence, and so hears, as if he should now hear his last; catching every word that drops from the preacher's lips, ere it fall to the ground, and laying it up carefully, where he may be sure to fetch it. He sits not to censure, but, to learn; yet speculation and knowledge is the least

drift of his labour. Nothing is his own, but what he practises.

Is he invited to God's feast? He hates to come in a foul and slovenly dress, but trims up his soul so as may be fit for a heavenly guest. Neither doth he leave his stomach at home, cloyed with the world; but brings a sharp appetite with him; and so feeds, as if he meant to live for ever. All earthly delicacies are unsavoury to him in respect of that celestial manna. Shortly, he so eats and drinks, as one that sees himself set at table with God and his angels; and rises and departs, full of his Saviour; and, in the strength of that meal, walks vigorously and cheerfully on towards his glory.

Finally, as he well knows, that he lives, and moves, and hath his being in God, so he refers his life, motions, and being wholly to God; so acting all things, as if God did them by him; so using all things, as one that enjoys God in them: and, in the mean time, so walking on earth, that he doth in a sort carry his heaven with him.

THE BREATHINGS OF THE DEVOUT SOUL.

I. **BLESSED** Lord God, thou callest me to obedience; and fain would I follow thee; but what good can this wretched heart of mine be capable of, except thou put it there? Thou knowest I cannot so much as wish to think well, without thee, I have strong powers to offend thee; my sins are my own; but whence should I have any inclination to good, but from thee, who art only and all good? Lord, work me to what thou requirest, and then require what thou wilt.

II. Lord God, whither need I go to seek thee? Thou art so with me, as that I cannot move but in thee. I look up to heaven: there I know thy Majesty most manifests itself; but withal I know, that, being here, thou art never out of thy heaven, for it is thy presence only that makes heaven. O give me to enjoy thee in this lowest region of thy heavenly habitation: and as, in respect of my natural being, I live and move in thee, so let me not live and move spiritually, but with thee and to thee.

III. Whither now, O whither do ye rove, O my thoughts? Can ye hope to find rest in any of these sublunary contentments? Alas, how can they yield any stay to you, that have no settlement in themselves? Is there not enough in the infinite Good to take you up; but that ye will be wandering after earthly vanities? O my Lord, how justly mightest thou cast me off with scorn, for casting any affective glances upon so base a rival! Truly, Lord, I am ashamed of this my hateful inconstancy; but it is thou only

that must remedy it. O thou that art the Father of mercies, pity my wildness and weak distractions. Take thou my heart to thee. It is thine own. Keep it with thee; tie it close to thee by the cords of love; that it may not so much as cast down an eye upon this wretched and perishing world.

IV. Lord, I confess, to my shame, thou art a great loser by me; for besides my not improving of thy favours, I have not kept even-reckonings with thee; I have not justly tallied up by thy inestimable benefits. Thy very privative mercies are both without and beyond my account; for every evil that I am free from, is a new blessing from thee. That I am out of bondage, that I am out of pain and misery, that I am out of the dominion of sin, out of the tyranny of Satan, out of the agonies of an afflicted soul, out of the torments of hell; Lord, what unspeakable mercies are these! yet when did I bless thee for any of them? Thy positive bounties I can feel, but with a benumbed and imperfect sense. Lord, do thou enlarge and intenerate my heart: make me truly sensible, as of my good received, so of my escaped evils; and take thou to thyself the glory of them both.

V. Ah, my Lord God, what heats and colds do I feel in my soul! Sometimes I find myself so vigorous in grace, that no thought of doubt dare shew itself, and, methinks, I durst challenge my hellish enemies; another while I feel myself so dejected and heartless, as if I had no interest in the God of my salvation, nor ever had received any certain pledges of his favour. What shall I say to this various disposition? Whether, Lord, is it my wretchedness to suffer myself to be robbed of thee, for the time, by temptation? or whether is this the course of thy proceedings in the dispensations of thy graces to the sons of men, that thou wilt have the breathings of thy Spirit, as where, so how, and when thou pleasest? Surely, O my God, if I did not know thee constant to thine everlasting mercies, I should be utterly disheartened with these sad intervals. Now, when my sense fails me, I make use of my faith; and am no less sure of thee, even when I feel thee not, than when I find the clearest evidences of thy gracious presence. Lord, shine upon me with the light of thy countenance, if

it may be, always; but whenever that is clouded, strengthen thou my faith; so shall I be safe, even when I am comfortless.

VI. O my God, I am justly ashamed to think what favours I have received from thee, and what poor returns I have made to thee. Truly, Lord, I must needs say, thou hast thought nothing either in earth or in heaven too good for me; and I, on the other side, have grudged thee that weak and worthless obedience which thou hast required of me. Alas, what pleasure could I have done to thee who art infinite, if I had sacrificed my whole self to thee, as thou commandest? Thou art and wilt be thyself, though the world were not: it is I, I only, that could be a gainer by this happy match, which, in my own wrong, I have unthankfully neglected. I see it is not so much what we have, as how we employ it. O thou that hast been so bountiful in heaping thy rich mercies upon me, vouchsafe to grant me yet one gift more—give me grace and power to improve all thy gifts to the glory of the Giver; otherwise it had been better for me to have been poor than ungrateful.

VII. Ah, Lord, what struggling have I with my weak fears! How do I anticipate my evils by distrust! What shall I do when I am old? How shall I be able to endure pain? How shall I pass through the horrid gates of death? O my God, where is my faith, that I am thus surprised? Had I not thee to uphold and strengthen my soul, well might I tremble and sink under these cares; but now that I have the assurance of so strong a helper as commands all the powers of heaven, earth, and hell, what a shame is it for me to give so much way to my wretched infidelity, as to punish myself with the expectation of future evils! Oh for “the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith!” Thou, O God, art my refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble: therefore will I not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.”

VIII. Lord, I made account my days should have been but an inch, but thou hast made them a span long, having drawn out the length of a crazy life beyond the period of my hopes. It is for something surely, that thou hast thus

long respited me from my grave which looked for me many years ago. Here I am, O my God, attending thy good pleasure. Thou knowest best what thou hast to do with me; dispose of me as thou wilt: only make me faithful in all thy services, resolute to trust myself with thee in all events, careful to be approved of thee in all my ways; and crown my decayed age with such fruits, as may be pleasing to thee, and available to the good of many: lastly, let me live to thee and die in thee.

IX. How oft, Lord, have I wondered to see the strange carriage of thine administration of these earthly affairs! and therein to see thy marvellous wisdom, power, goodness, in fetching good out of evil! Alas, we, wretched men, are apt enough to fetch the worst of evils out of the greatest good, turning the grace of thee our God into lasciviousness; but how have I seen thee, of lifeless stones to raise up children to Abraham, of sinners to make saints; out of a desperate confusion to fetch order; out of a bloody war, a happy peace; out of resolutions of revenge, love; out of the rock, waters; out of a persecutor, an apostle! How can I be discouraged with unlikelihoods, when I see thee work by contraries? It is not for me, O my God, to examine or prejudge thy counsels. Take what ways thou wilt, so thou bring me to thine own end. All paths shall be direct, that lead me to blessedness.

X. How many good purposes, O my God, have I taken up, and let fall to the ground again without effect! How teeming hath this barren womb of my heart been of false conceptions! But especially when thy hand hath been smart and heavy upon me in mine affliction, how have I tasked myself with duties, and revived my firm resolutions of more strict obedience, which yet, upon the continuance of my better condition, I have slackened! Lord, it is from thee that I purposed well; it is from my own sinful weakness that I failed in my performances. If any good come from me, the will and the deed must be both thine; "the very preparations of the heart are from thee:" and if I have devised my way, it must be thou that directest my steps. O God, do thou ripen and perfect all the good motions that thou puttest into my soul; and make my health but such, as my sickness promised.

XI. Every man, Lord, is unwilling that his name should die. We are all naturally ambitious of being thought on when we are gone. Those that have not living monuments to perpetuate them, affect to have dead; if Absalom have not a son, he will erect a pillar. Yet when we have all done, time eats us out at the last. "There is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever; seeing that which now is, in the days to come shall all be forgotten," Eccl. ii. 16. O God, let it be my care and ambition, whatever becomes of my memory here below, that my name may be recorded in heaven.

XII. Thy wise providence, O God, hath so ordered it, that every man's mind seeks and finds contentment in something; otherwise it could not be, since we must meet with so frequent crosses in the world, but that man's life would be burdensome to him. One takes pleasure in his hawk or hound; another, in his horses and furnitures: one, in fair buildings; another, in pleasant walks and beautiful gardens; one, in travelling abroad; another, in the enjoying of the profits and pleasures of his home; one, in a comfortable wife; another, in loving and dutiful children. But when all is done, if there be not somewhat else to uphold the heart in the evil day, it must sink. O God, do thou possess my soul of thee: let me place all my felicity in the fruition of thine infinite goodness; so I am sure the worst of the world hath not power to render me other than happy.

XIII. O Lord God, under what opposite aspects do I stand from the world! How variously am I construed by men! One pities my condition; another praises my patience: one favours me out of the opinion of some good that he thinks he sees in me; another dislikes me for some imagined evil. What are the eyes or tongues of men to me? Let me not know what they say or think of me, and what am I the better or worse for them? They can have no influence upon me without my own apprehension. All is, in what terms I stand with thee, my God. If thou be pleased to look upon me with the eye of thy tender mercy and compassion, what care I to be unjustly brow-beaten of the world? If I may be blessed with thy favour, let me be made "a gazing stock to the world, to angels, and to men."

XIV. "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth:" what is it which thou wouldest have me to do, that I may find rest to my soul? I am willing to exercise myself in all the acts of piety which thou requirest; I am ready to fast, to pray, to read, to hear, to meditate, to communicate, to give alms, to exhort, admonish, reprove, comfort where thou biddest me; and if there be any other duty appertaining to devotion or mercy, let me serve thee in it: but alas, O my God, howsoever I know these works are in themselves well-pleasing unto thee, yet as they fall from my wretchedness, they are stained with so many imperfections, that I have more reason to crave pardon for them, than to put confidence in them; and if I could perform them ever so exquisitely, yet one sin is more than enough to dash all my obedience. I see, then, O Lord, I well see, there is no act, that I can be capable to do unto thee, wherein I can find any repose: it must be thine act to me, which only can effect it. It is thy gracious word, "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Lo, this rest must be thy gift, not my earning; and what can be freer than a gift? Thou givest it then, but to those that come to thee, not to those that come not; to those that come to thee laden and labouring under the sense of their own wretchedness, not to the proud and careless. O Saviour, thy sinner is sufficiently laden with the burden of his iniquities: lade thou me yet more with true penitent sorrow for my sins, and enable me then to come unto thee by a lively faith. Take thou the praise of thine own work. Give me the grace to come, and give me rest in coming.

XV. O blessed Saviour, what strange variety of conceits do I find concerning thy thousand years' reign! What riddles are in that prophecy, which no human tongue can read! Where to fix the beginning of that marvellous millenary, and where the end; and what manner of reign it shall be, whether temporal or spiritual, on earth or in heaven; undergoes as many constructions, as there are pens that have undertaken it: and yet when all is done, I see thine apostle speaks only of the souls of thy martyrs reigning so long with thee, not of thy reigning on earth so long with those martyrs. How busy are

the tongues of men, how are their brains taken up, with the indeterminable construction of this enigmatical truth, when, in the mean time, the care of thy spiritual reign in their hearts is neglected! O my Saviour, while others weary themselves with the disquisition of thy personal reign here upon earth for a thousand years, let it be the whole bent and study of my soul to make sure of my personal reign with thee in heaven to all eternity.

XVI. Blessed be thy name, O God, who hast made a good use even of hell itself. How many atheous hearts have been convinced by the very operations of devils! Those who would, with the stupid Sadducees, persuade themselves there are no spirits; yet when they have sensibly found the marvellous effects wrought even by the base instruments of Satan, they have been forced to confess, that “doubtless there is a God that rules the world;” for so great powers of evil spirits must necessarily evince the greater powers of good. It is of thy wise and holy dispensation, that thy good angels do not so frequently exhibit themselves, and give so visible demonstrations of their presence to thy saints, as the evil angels do to their vassals, though they are ever as present and more powerful. What need they, when thou so mightily overrulest those malignant spirits, that thou forcest from them thine own glory, and advantage to thy chosen? Lord, how much more shall all thy other creatures serve to thy praise, when thy very hellish enemies shall proclaim thy justice, goodness, omnipotence!

XVII. Speculation, O Lord, is not more easy, than practice is difficult. How many have we known, who, as it was said of the philosophers of old, know how to speak well, but live ill! How many have written books of chemistry, and given very confident directions for the finding out of that precious stone of the philosophers! but how many have indeed made gold? Practice is that which thou, O God, chiefly requirest and respectest, who hast said, “If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them.” “Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.” O Lord, do thou enlighten mine eyes with the knowledge of thy will; but, above all, do thou rectify my affections; guide my feet into the ways of thy commandments; apply

my heart to fulfil thy statutes alway; and prosper thou the work of my hands upon me, O prosper thou my handy-work.

XVIII. How oft have I wondered, O Lord, at the boldness of those men, who, knowing they must shortly die, yet dare do those things which will draw upon them eternity of torments! What shall I say, but that "the fool hath said in his heart, There is no God?" Surely, men love themselves well enough; and would be loth to do that which would procure them an inevitable misery and pain. Did they therefore believe there were another world, and that they must be called to a strict reckoning for all their actions, and be doomed to an everlasting death for their wicked deeds, they durst not, they could not do those acts which should make them eternally miserable. Let me say to the most desperate ruffian, "There is poison in this cup; drink this draught, and thou diest;" he would have the wit to keep his lips close, and cast the potion to the ground: were it not for their infidelity, so would men do to the most plausible but deadly offers of sin. O Lord, since I know thy righteous judgments, teach me to tremble at them. Restrain thou my feet from every evil way; and teach me so to walk, as one that looks every hour to appear before thy just and dreadful tribunal.

XIX. The longer I live, O my God, the more do I wonder at all the works of thy hands. I see such admirable artifice in the very least and most despicable of all thy creatures, as doth every day more and more astonish my observation. I need not look so far as heaven for matter of marvel, (though therein thou art infinitely glorious) while I have but a spider in my window, or a bee in my garden, or a worm under my feet. Every one of these overcomes me with a just amazement; yet can I see no more than their very outsides; their inward form which gives their being and operations, I cannot pierce into. The less I can know, O Lord, the more let me wonder; and the less I can satisfy myself with marvelling at thy works, the more let me adore the majesty and omnipotence of thee that wroughtest them.

XX. Alas, my Lord God, what poor, weak, imperfect services are those, even at the best, that I can present thee

withal! What lean, lame, and blemished sacrifices, do I bring to thine altar! I know thou art worthy of more than my soul is capable to perform; and fain would I tender thee the best of thine own: but “what I would, that I do not,” yea, cannot do. Surely, had I not to do with an infinite mercy, I might justly look to be punished for my very obedience. But now, Lord, my impotence redounds to the praise of thy goodness; for were I more answerable to thy justice, the glory of thy mercy would be so less eminent in my remission and acceptance. Here I am before thee to await thy good pleasure. Thou knowest whether it be better to give me more ability, or to accept of that poor ability thou hast given me; but since when thou hast given me most, I shall still and ever stand in need of thy forgiveness, let my humble suit be to thee always, rather for pardon of my defects, than for a supply of thy graces.

XXI. O my God, how do I see many profane and careless souls spend their time in jollity and pleasure! “The harp and the viol, the tabret, and the pipe, and wine, are in their feasts.” While I, that desire to walk close with thee in all conscionable obedience, droop and languish under a dull heaviness and heartless dejection. I am sure I have a thousand times more cause of joy and cheerfulness, than the merriest of all those wild and jovial spirits; they have a world to play withal, but I have a God to rejoice in; their sports are trivial and momentary, my joy is serious and everlasting; one dram of my mirth is worth a pound of theirs. But I confess, O Lord, how much I am wanting to myself in not stirring up this holy fire of spiritual joy, but suffering it to lie raked up under the dead ashes of a sad neglect. O thou who art the God of hope, quicken this heavenly affection in my soul; and fill me “with all joy and peace in believing.” Make my heart so much more light than the worldling’s, by how much my estate is happier.

XXII. What shall I do, Lord? I strive and tug, what I may, with my natural corruptions, and with the “spiritual wickednesses in high places,” which set upon my soul; but sometimes I am foiled, and go halting out of the field. It is thy mercy that I live, being so fiercely assaulted by

those principalities and powers ; it were more than wonder, if I should escape such hands without a wound. Even that holy servant of thine, who strove with thine angel for a blessing, went limping away, though he prevailed ; what marvel is it, that so weak a wretch as I, striving with many evil angels for the avoidance of a curse, come off with a maim or a scar ? But, blessed be thy name, the wounds that I receive are not mortal ; and when I fall, it is but to my knees ; whence I rise with new courage and hopes of victory. Thou who art the God of all power, and keepest the keys of hell and death, hast said, " Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you : " Lord, I do and will, by thy merciful aid, still and ever resist : make thou my faith as steadfast as my will is resolute. O still " teach thou my hands to war, and my fingers to fight. " Arm thou my soul with strength ; and at last, according to thy gracious promise, crown it with victory.

XXIII. O Lord God, how ambitious, how covetous of knowledge, is this soul of mine ! " As the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing, " no more is the mind of man with understanding ; yea, so insatiable is my heart, that the more I know, the more I desire to know, and the less I think I know. Under heaven, there can be no bounds set to this intellectual appetite. O do thou stop the mouth of my soul with thyself, who art infinite. " Whom have I in heaven, but thee ? and there is none upon earth, that I desire besides thee, " Psalm lxxiii. 25. Alas, Lord, if I could know all creatures, with all their forms, qualities, workings ; if I could know as much as innocent Adam or wise Solomon ; yea more, if I could know all that is done in earth or heaven ; what were my soul the better, if it have not attained the knowledge of thee ? since, as the preacher hath most wisely observed, " in much wisdom is much grief ; and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow, " Eccl. i. 18. O then, set off my heart from affecting that knowledge whose end is sorrow, and fix it upon that knowledge which brings everlasting life ; " and this is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God ; and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent, " John xvii. 3.

XXIV. O my God, what miserable uncertainties there

are in these worldly hopes ! But yesterday I made account of an eminent advantage of my estate, which now ends in a deep loss. How did we lately feed ourselves with the hope of a firm and during peace, which now shuts up in too much blood ! How confidently did I rely upon the promised favour of some great friends, which now leave me in the suds, as the scorn of a miscalled fortune ! In how slippery places, O Lord, do our feet stand ! if that may be said to stand, which is ever sliding, never fixed ; and not more slippery than brittle, so that there is not more danger of falling, than of sinking. With thee, O God, with thee only is a constant immutability of happiness ; there let me seek it, there let me find it ; and, overlooking all the fickle objects of this vain world, let my soul pitch itself upon that blessed immortality, which ere long it hopes to enjoy with thee.

XXV. Lord God, what a wearisome circle do I walk in here below ! I sleep, and dress, and work, and eat, and work again, and eat again, and undress, and sleep again ; and thus, wearing out my time, find a satiety in all these troublesome. Lord, when shall I come to that state, wherein I shall do nothing but enjoy thee, do nothing but praise thee ; and in that one work shall find such infinite contentment, that my glorified soul cannot wish to do any other ; and shall therein alone bestow a blessed eternity ?

XXVI. O God, how troublesome and painful do I find this sun of thine, whose scorching beams beat upon my head ! And yet this excellent creature of thine is that, to which, under thee, we are beholden for our very life ; and it is thy great blessing to the earth, that it may enjoy these strong and forcible rays from it. O who shall be able to endure the burning flames of thy wrath, which thou intendest for the punishment and everlasting torment of thine enemies ? And if men shall blaspheme the name of thee, the God of heaven, (Rev. xvi. 9.) for the great heat of that beneficial creature, what shall we think they will do for that fire, which shall be consuming them to all eternity ? Lord, keep my soul from those flames, which shall be ever burning, and never either quenched or abated.

XXVII. Which way, O Lord, which way can I look, and

not see some sad examples of misery? One wants his limbs, with Mephibosheth; another, his sight, with Bartimeus; a third, with Lazarus, wants bread and a whole skin: one is pained in his body; another, plundered of his estate; a third, troubled in mind: one is pined in prison; another, tortured on the rack; a third languisheth under the loss of a dear son, or wife, or husband. Who am I, Lord, that, for the present, I enjoy an immunity from all these sorrows? I am sure, none groans under them, that have deserved them more. It is thy mercy, thy mere mercy, O my good God, that any of these calamities have fallen beside me. O make me truly thankful for thine infinite goodness; and yet only so sensible of thy gracious indulgence this way, as that when any of these evils shall seize upon me, I may be no more dejected in the sense of them, than I am now overjoyed with the favour of their forbearance.

XXVIII. O blessed God, what variety of gifts hast thou scattered amongst the sons of men! To one thou hast given vigour of body; to another, agility; beauty, to a third; to one, depth of judgment; to another, quickness of apprehension; to one, readiness and rarity of invention; to another, tenacity of memory; to one, the knowledge of liberal arts; to another, the exquisiteness of manuary skill; to one, worldly wealth; to another, honour; to one, a wise heart; to another, an eloquent tongue; to one, more than enough; to another, contentment with a little; to one, valour; to another, sagacity. These favours, O Lord, thou hast promiscuously dispersed amongst both thy friends and enemies: but O how transcendent are those spiritual mercies, which thou hast reserved for thine own; the graces of heavenly wisdom, lively faith, fervent charity, firm hope, joy in the Holy Ghost, and all the rest of that divine bevy! For any competency of the least of thy common blessings, I desire to be thankful to thy bounty; for which of them, O God, can I either merit or requite? but oh for a soul truly and eagerly ambitious of those thy best mercies! O let me ever long for them, and ever be insatiable of them! O do thou fill my heart with the desire of them, and let that desire never find itself filled.

XXIX. How comfortable a style is that, O God, which thine apostle gives to thy heaven, while he calls it "the inheritance of the saints in light!" None can come there, but saints. The rooms of this lower world are taken up commonly with wicked men, with beasts, with devils; but into that heavenly Jerusalem, no unholy thing can enter. Neither can any saint be excluded thence; each of them has not only a share, but an entire right to thy glory. And how many just titles are there, O Saviour, to that region of blessedness! It is thy Father's gift; it is thy purchase; it is thy saints inheritance; theirs, only in thy right; by thy gracious adoption they are sons, and, as sons, heirs, co-heirs with thee of that blessed patrimony; so feoffed upon them, so possessed of them, that they can never be disseised. And, Lord, how glorious an inheritance it is! An inheritance in light, in light incomprehensible, in light inaccessible. Lo, the most spiritual of all thy visible creatures is light; and yet this light is but the effect and emanation of one of thy creatures, the sun, and serves only for the illumination of this visible world: but that supernal light is from the all-glorious beams of thy divine majesty, diffusing themselves to those blessed spirits, both angels and souls of thy saints, who live in the joyful fruition of thee to all eternity. Alas, Lord, we do here dwell in darkness and under an uncomfortable opacity, while thy face is clouded from us with manifold temptations; there above, with thee, is pure light, a constant noon-tide of glory. I am here under a miserable and obscure wardship. O teach me to despise the best of earth; and ravish my soul with a longing desire of being possessed of that blessed "inheritance of the saints in light."

XXX. What outward blessing can be sweeter, than civil peace? What judgment more heavy, than that of the sword? Yet, O Saviour, there is a peace which thou disclaimest, and there is a sword which thou challengest to bring: peace with our corruptions is war against thee, and that war in our bosoms, wherein the Spirit fighteth against the flesh, is peace with thee. O let thy good Spirit raise and foment this holy and intestine war more and more within me! And as for my outward spiritual enemies, how can there be a victory without war? and how

can I hope for a crown without victory? O do thou ever gird me with strength to the battle! Enable thou me to resist unto blood. Make me faithful to the death, that thou mayest give me the crown of life.

XXXI. O Lord God, how subject is this wretched heart of mine to repining and discontentment! If it may not have what it would, how ready it is, like a froward child, to throw away what it hath! I know and feel this to be out of that natural pride which is so deep rooted in me; for could I be sensible enough of my own unworthiness, I should think every thing too good, every thing too much for me. My very being, O Lord, is more than I am ever able to answer thee; and how could I deserve it, when I was not? but that I have any helps of my well-being here, or hopes and means of my being glorious hereafter, how far is it beyond the reach of my soul! Lord, let me find my own nothingness; so shall I be thankful for a little, and, in my very want, bless thee.

XXXII. Where art thou, O my God? Whither hast thou withdrawn thyself? It is not long, since I found thy comfortable presence with my soul: now I miss thee, and mourn and languish for thee. Nay rather, where art thou, O my soul? My God is where he was; neither can be any other, than himself. The change is in thee, whose inconstant disposition varies continually, and cannot find itself fixed upon so blessed an object. It will never be better with me, O my God, until it shall please thee to "stablish my heart with thy free Spirit," and to keep it close to thee, that it may not be carried away with vain distractions, with sinful temptations. Lord, my God, as thou art always present with me, and canst no more be absent than not be thyself, so let me be always with thee in an humble and faithful acknowledgment of thy presence. As I can never be out of thine all-seeing eye, so let mine eyes be ever bent upon thee who art invisible. Thou that hast given me eyes, improve them to thy glory and my happiness.

XXXIII. My bosom, O Lord, is a Rebekah's womb: there are twins striving within it, a Jacob and an Esau, the old man and the new. While I was in the barren state of my unregeneration, all was quiet within me; now this

strife is both troublesome and painful ; so that nature is ready to say, " If it be so, why am I thus ?" Gen. xxv. 22. But withal, O my God, I bless thee for this happy unquietness ; for I know there is just cause of comfort in these inward strugglings. My soul is now not unfruitful, and is conceived with a holy seed, which wrestles with my natural corruptions ; and if my Esau have got the start in the priority of time, yet my Jacob shall follow him hard at the heel, and happily supplant him ; and though I must nourish them both as mine, yet I can, through thy grace, imitate thy choice, and say with thee, " Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated." Blessed God, make thou that word of thine good in me, that " the elder shall serve the younger."

XXXIV. Alas, my Lord God, how small matters trouble me ! Every petty occurrence is ready to rob me of my peace ; so as, methinks, I am like some little cock-boat in a rough sea, which every billow topples up and down, and threatens to sink. I can chide this weak pusillanimity in myself ; but it is thou that must redress it. Lord, work my heart to so firm a settledness upon thee, that it may never be shaken, no, not with the violent gusts of temptation, much less with the easy gales of secular mis-accidents. Even when I am hardest pressed, in the multitude of the sorrows of my heart, let thy comforts refresh my soul ; but as for these slight crosses, O teach me to despise them, as not worthy of my notice, much less of my vexation. Let my heart be taken up with thee ; and then what care I, whether the world smiles or frowns.

XXXV. What a comfort it is, O Saviour, that thou art " the first fruits of them that sleep !" Those that die in thee, do but sleep. Thou saidst so once of thy Lazarus, and mayest say so of him again ; he doth but sleep still. His first sleep was but short ; this latter, though longer, is no less true ; out of which he shall no less surely awake at thy second call, than he did before at thy first. His first sleep and waking was singular ; this latter is the same with ours : we all lie down in our bed of earth, as sure to wake as ever we can be to shut our eyes. In and from thee, O blessed Saviour, is this our assurance, who art " the first fruits of them that sleep." The first handful

of the first-fruits was not presented for itself, but for the whole field wherein it grew; the virtue of that oblation extended itself to the whole crop. Neither didst thou, O blessed Jesu, rise again for thyself only, but the power and virtue of thy resurrection reaches to all thine: so thy chosen vessel tells us, "Christ the first-fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming," 1 Cor. xv. 23. So that, though the resurrection be of all the dead, both just and unjust, yet to rise by the power of thy resurrection, is so proper to thine own, as that thou, O Saviour, hast styled it "the resurrection of the just," Luke xiv. 14, while the rest shall be dragged out of their graves, by the power of thy godhead, to their dreadful judgment. Already therefore, O Jesu, are we risen in thee; and as surely shall rise in our own persons. The locomotive faculty is in the head: thou who art our Head, art risen; we who are thy members, must and shall follow. Say then, O my dying body, say boldly unto death, "Rejoice not over me, O mine enemy, for though I fall, yet shall I rise again," Micah vii. 8. Yea, Lord, the virtue of thy first-fruits diffuseth itself, not to our rising only, but to a blessed immortality of these bodies of ours; for as thou didst rise immortal and glorious, so shall we by and with thee, "who shalt change these vile bodies, and make them like to thy glorious body." The same power that could shake off death, can put on glory and majesty. Lay thee down therefore, O my body, quietly and cheerfully; and look to rise in another hue: Thou art "sown in corruption," thou shalt be "raised in incorruption;" thou art "sown in dishonour," thou shalt be "raised in glory;" thou art "sown in weakness," but shalt be "raised in power."

XXXVI. In this life, in this death of the body, O Lord, I see there are no degrees, though differences of time. The man that died yesterday, is as truly dead, as Abel, the first man that died in the world; and Methuselah that lived nine hundred and sixty-nine years, did not more truly live, than the child that did but salute and leave the world. But in the life to come and the second death, there are degrees; degrees of blessedness to the glorified, degrees of torments to the damned; the least whereof is unspeakable, unconceivable. O thou that art the Lord of life and

death, keep my soul from those steps that go down to the chambers of death ; and once set it, for higher I dare not sue to go, but over the threshold of glory and blessedness.

XXXVII. O Lord my God, I am as very a pilgrim, as ever walked upon the earth. Why should I look to be in any better condition, than my neighbours, than my forefathers ? Even the best of them, that were most fixed upon their inheritance, were no other than strangers at home. It was not in the power of the world to naturalize them ; much less to make them enrol themselves free denizens here below. They knew their country which they sought, was above, so infinitely rich and pleasant, that these earthly regions which they must pass through, are, in comparison, worthy of nothing but contempt. My condition is no other than theirs. I wander here in a strange country ; what wonder is it, if I meet with foreigners' fare, hard usage and neglect ? Why do I intermeddle with the affairs of a nation that is not mine ? Why do I clog myself in my way, with the base and heavy lumber of the world ? Why are not my affections homeward ? Why do I not long to see and enjoy my Father's house ? O my God, thou that hast put me into the state of a pilgrim, give me a pilgrim's heart. Set me off from this wretched world, wherein I am : let me hate to think of dwelling here. Let it be my only care, how to pass through this miserable wilderness to the promised land of a blessed eternity.

XXXVIII. One talent at the least, O Lord, hast thou put into my hand ; and that sum is great to him that is not worth a dram : but, alas, what have I done with it ? I confess I have not hid it in a napkin, but have been laying it out to some poor advantage ; yet surely the gain is so unanswerable, that I am afraid of an audit. I see that none of the approved servants in the gospel brought in an increase of less value than the receipt ; Luke xix. 16, 19 : I fear I shall come short of the sum. O thou who justly holdest thyself wronged with the style of " an austere master," vouchsafe to accept of my so mean improvement ; and thou who valuedst the poor widow's mites above the rich gifts cast into thy treasury, be pleased to allow of those few pounds that my weak endeavours could raise from thy stock ; and mercifully reward thy servant, not

according to his success, but according to his true intentions of glorifying thee.

XXXIX. What a word is this which I hear from thee, O Saviour, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock!" Thou who art the Lord of life, God blessed for ever, to stand and knock at the door of a sinful heart! O what a praise is this of thy mercy and long-suffering! What a shame to our dull neglect and graceless ingratitude! For a David to say, "I waited patiently upon the Lord;" "Truly my soul waited upon God;" this is but meet and comely, for it is no other than the duty of the greatest monarchs on earth, yea, of the highest angels in heaven, to attend their Maker; but for thee, the great God of heaven, to wait at the door of us sinful dust and ashes, what a condescension is this! what a longanimity! It were our happiness, O Lord, if, upon our greatest suit and importunity, we might have the favour to entertain thee into our hearts; but that thou shouldest importune us to admit thee, and shouldest wait at the posts of our doors, till thy "head be filled with dew, and thy locks with the drops of the night"—it is such a mercy, as there is not room enough in our souls to wonder at. In the mean time, what shall I say to our wretched unthankfulness and impious negligence? Thou hast graciously invited us to thee, and hast said, "Knock, and it shall be opened;" and yet thou continuest knocking at our doors, and we open not, willingly delaying to let in our happiness. We know how easy it were for thee to break open the brazen doors of our breasts, and to come in; but the kingdom of heaven suffereth not violence from thee, though it should suffer it from us. Thou wilt do all thy works in a sweet and gracious way, as one who will not force, but win love. Lord, I cannot open, unless thou that knockest for entrance, wilt be pleased to enable me with strength to turn the key, and to unbolt this unwieldy bar of my soul. O do thou make way for thyself, by the strong motions of thy blessed Spirit, into the inmost rooms of my heart, and do thou powerfully incline me to mine own happiness; else thou wilt be ever excluded, and I shall be ever miserable.

XL. In what pangs couldst thou be, O Asaph, that so woeful a word should fall from thee, "Hath God forgotten

to be gracious?" Surely the temptation went so high, that the next step had been blasphemy. Had not that good God whom thy bold weakness questions for forgetfulness, in great mercy remembered thee, and brought thee speedily to remember thyself and him; that which thou confessest to have been infirmity, had proved a sinful despair. I dare say for thee, that word washed thy cheeks with many a tear, and was worthy of more; for, O God, what can be so dear to thee, as the glory of thy mercy? There is none of thy blessed attributes, which thou desirest to set forth so much unto the sons of men, and so much abhorrest to be disparaged by our distraction, as thy mercy. Thou canst, O Lord, forget thy displeasure against thy people; thou canst forget our iniquities, and cast our sins out of thy remembrance; but thou canst no more forget to be gracious, than thou canst cease to be thyself. O my God, I sin against thy justice hourly, and thy mercy interposes for my remission; but O keep me from sinning against thy mercy. What plea can I hope for, when I have made my advocate mine enemy?

· XLI. How happy, O Lord, is the man that hath thee for his God! He can want nothing that is good; he can be hurt by nothing that is evil; his sins are pardoned; his good endeavours are accepted; his crosses are sanctified; his prayers are heard; all that he hath, are blessings; all that he suffers, are advantages; his life is holy; his death, comfortable; his estate after death, glorious. O that I could feel thee to be my God! that I could enjoy a heavenly communion with thee! In vain should earth or hell labour to make me other than blessed.

XLII. How just a motion is this of thine, O thou sweet singer of Israel, "O love the Lord, all ye his saints!" Surely they can be no saints, that love not such a Lord. Had he never been good to them, yet that infinite goodness which is in himself, would have commanded love from saints. Yet how could they have been saints, if he had wholly kept his goodness to himself? In that then he hath made them saints, he hath communicated his goodness to them, and challengeth all love from them; and being made such, how infinitely hath he obliged them with all kinds of mercies! How can ye choose, O ye saints, but

love the Lord? What have ye, what are ye, what can ye be, but from his mere bounty? They are slight favours that he hath done you for the world; in these his very enemies share with you: how transcendent are his spiritual obligations! Hath he not given you his angels for your attendants, himself for your Protector, his Son out of his bosom for your Redeemer, his Spirit for your Comforter, his heaven for your inheritance? If gifts can attract love, O my God, who can have any interest in my heart, but thy blessed self that hast been so infinitely munificent to my soul? Take it to thee, thou that hast made and bought it. Enamour it thoroughly of thy goodness: make me sick of love: yea, let me die for love of thee who hast loved me unto death, that I may fully enjoy the perfection of thy love in the height of thy glory.

XLIII. Lord, how have I seen men miscarried into those sins, the premonition whereof they would have thought incredible, and their yieldance thereto impossible! How many Hazaels hath our very age yielded; that if a prophet should have foretold their acts, would have said, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do these great things?" O my God, why do not I suspect myself? What hold have I of myself, more than these other miserable examples of human frailty? Lord God, if thou take off thy hand from me, what wickedness shall escape me? I know I cannot want a tempter; and that tempter cannot want either power, or malice, or vigilance, or skill, or baits, or opportunities; and, for myself, I find too well, that of myself I have no strength to resist any of his temptations. O for thy mercy's sake, uphold thou me with thy mighty hand. Stand close to me in all assaults; shew thyself strong in my weakness. "Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins: let them not have dominion over me; then" only "shall I be upright, and innocent from the great transgression," Psalm xix. 13.

XLIV. It is thy title, O Lord, and only thine, that thou givest "songs in the night." The night is a sad and dolorous season; as the light contrarily is the image of cheerfulness. Like as it is in bodily pains and aches, that they are still worst towards night; so it is in the cares and griefs of mind: then they assault us most, when they are helped

on by the advantage of an uncomfortable darkness. Many men can give themselves songs in the day of their prosperity, who can but howl in the night of their affliction : but for a Paul and Silas to sing in their prison at midnight, for an Asaph to call to remembrance his song in the night, this comes only from that Spirit of thine, whose peculiar style is the Comforter. And surely as music sounds best in the night, so those heavenly notes of praise which we sing to thee our God in the gloomy darkness of our adversity, cannot but be most pleasing in thine ears. Thine apostle bids us, which is our ordinary wont, when we are merry to sing, when afflicted to pray ; but if when we are afflicted we can sing, as also when we are merriest we can pray, that ditty must needs be so much more acceptable to thee, as it is a more powerful effect of the joy of thy Holy Ghost. O my God, I am conscious of my own infirmity : I know I am naturally subject to a dull and heavy dumpishness under whatsoever affliction. Thou that art the God of all comfort, remedy this heartless disposition in me. Pull this lead out of my bosom. Make me not patient only, but cheerful under my trials. Fill thou my heart with joy, and my mouth with songs, in the night of my tribulation.

XLV. It is a true word, O Lord, that thy seer said of thee long ago, "The Lord seeth not as man seeth." Man sees the face, thou seest the heart : man sees things as they seem ; thou seest them as they are : many things are hid from the eyes of men ; all things lie open and displayed before thee. What a madness then were it in me, to come disguised into thy presence ; and to seek to hide my counsels from thine all-seeing eyes ! I must be content, Lord, to be deluded here by fair appearances ; for I may not offer to look into the bosoms of men, which thou hast reserved for thyself : it is only the outside that I can judge by. Yea, O God, if I shall cast my eyes inward and look into my own breast, even there I find myself baffled, at home : "The heart of man is deceitful above all things ; who can know it ?" None but those piercing eyes of thine, can discover all the windings and turnings of that intricate piece. What would it avail me, O Lord, to mock the eyes of all the world with a semblance of holiness, whilst thou

shouldst see me false and filthy? Should I be censured by a world of men, when I am secretly allowed by thee, I could contemn it, yea, glory in their unjust reproach; but if thine eye shall note me guilty, to what purpose is all the applause of men? O thou that art the God of truth, do thou open and dissect this close heart of mine; search every fibre that is in or about it; and if thou findest any ill blood there, let it out; and if thou findest any hollowness, fill it up; and so work upon it, that it may be approved of thee that madest it. As for men, it shall be alike to me whether they spend their breath or save it.

XLVI. Lord God, what a world of treasure hast thou hid in the bowels of the earth, which no eye of man ever did, or shall, or can see! What goodly plants hast thou brought forth of the earth in wild, unknown regions, which no man ever beheld! What great wits hast thou shut up in a willing obscurity, which the world never takes notice of! In all which, thou shewest, that it is not only the use and benefit of man, which thou regardest in the great variety of thy creation and acts of administration of the world, but thine own glory and the fulfilling of thine own good pleasure: and if only the angels of heaven be witnesses of thy great works, thou canst not want a due celebration of thy praise. It is just with thee, O God, that thou shouldest regard only thy blessed self in all that thou doest or hast done; for all is thine, and thou art all. O that I could sincerely make thee the perfect scope of all my thoughts, of all my actions; that so we may both meet in one and the same happy end, thy glory in my eternal blessedness.

XLVII. Indeed, Lord, as thou sayest, "the night cometh when no man can work." What can we do when the light is shut in, but shut our eyes and sleep? When our senses are tied up and our limbs laid to rest, what can we do, but yield ourselves to a necessary repose? O my God, I perceive my night hastening on apace; my sun draws low; the shadows lengthen; vapours rise; and the air begins to darken. Let me bestir myself for the time. Let me lose none of my few hours. Let me work hard awhile, because I shall soon rest everlastingly.

XLVIII. Thou seest, Lord, how apt I am to contemn

this body of mine. Surely when I look back upon the stuff whereof it is made, no better than that I tread upon; and see the loathsomeness of all kinds that comes from it; and feel the pain that it oftentimes puts me to; and consider whither it is going; and how noisome it is, above all other creatures, upon the dissolution; I have much ado to hold good terms with so unequal a partner. But, on the other side, when I look up to thy hand, and see how fearfully and wonderfully thou hast made it; what infinite cost thou hast bestowed upon it, in that thou hast not thought thine own blood too dear to redeem it; that thou hast so far honoured it, as to make it the temple of thy Holy Ghost, and to admit it into a blessed communion with thyself; and hast decreed to do so great things for it hereafter, even to clothe it with immortality, and to make it like unto thy glorious body; I can bless thee for so happy a mate, and with patience digest all these necessary infirmities: and now I look upon this flesh, not as it is, withered and wrinkled, but as it will be, shining and glorified. O Lord, how vile soever this clay is in itself, yet make me, in thine interest and my hopes, so enamoured of it, as if I did already find it made celestial. O that my faith could prevent my change, and anticipate my ensuing glory!

XLIX. Lord, what a dreadful favour was that which thou shewedst to thy prophet Elijah, to send a fiery chariot for him, to convey him up to heaven! I should have thought, that the sight of so terrible a carriage should have fetched away his soul beforehand, and have left the body grovelling on the earth; but that good Spirit of thine, which had fore-signified that fiery rapture, had doubtless fore-armed thy servant with an answerable resolution to expect and undergo it. Either he knew that chariot, however fearful in the appearance, was only glorious and not penal; or else he cheerfully resolved, that such a momentary pain in the change would be followed with an eternity of happiness. O God, we are not worthy to know whereto thou hast reserved us. Perhaps thou hast appointed us to be in the number of those, whom thou shalt find alive at thy second coming; and then the case will be ours; we shall pass through fire to our immortality: or if thou hast ordained us to a speedier dispatch, perhaps thou

hast decreed that our way to thee shall be through a fiery trial. O God, whatever course thou, in thy holy wisdom, hast determined for the fetching up my soul from this vale of misery and tears, prepare me thoroughly for it; and do thou work my heart to so lively a faith in thee, that all the terrors of my death may be swallowed up in an assured expectation of my speedy glory; and that my last groans shall be immediately seconded with eternal hallelujahs in the glorious choir of thy saints and angels in heaven. Amen. Amen.

THE

GREAT MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

SECTION I.

“Great is the Mystery of Godliness.”—1 Tim. iii. 16.

LET no man go about to entertain the thoughts of the *great mystery of godliness*; but with a ravished heart; a heart filled with a gracious composition of love, and joy, and wonder. Such a one, O Saviour, I desire, through thy grace, to bring with me to the meditation of that thine infinitely glorious work of our redemption.

It was as possible for thy chosen vessel, who was by a divine ecstasy caught up into paradise, and there heard unutterable words, to express what he saw and heard above, as to set forth what was acted by thee here below: as therefore unable either to comprehend or utter things so far above wonder, he contents himself with a pathetical intimation of that which he saw could never be enough admired: “Great is the mystery of godliness.”

There are great mysteries of art, which the wit and experience of skilful men have discovered; there are greater mysteries of nature, some part whereof have been described by art and industry, but the greater part lies hidden from mortal eyes; but these are less than nothing to the great mystery of godliness: for what are these, but the deep secrets of the creature? mean therefore and finite, like itself; but the other are the unfathomable depths of an infinite Deity; fitter for the admiration of the highest angels of heaven, than for the reach of human conception.

Great were the mysteries of the law ; neither could the face of Moses be seen without his veil ; but what other were these, but the shadows of this great mystery of godliness ? What did that golden ark, overspread with glorious cherubims, that gorgeous temple, those perfumed altars, those bleeding sacrifices, that sumptuous priesthood, but prefigure thee, O blessed Saviour, who, in the fulness of time, shouldest be revealed to the world, and make up this great mystery of godliness ?

SECTION II.

God manifested in the Flesh.

THERE is nothing, O dear Jesu, that thou either didst or sufferedst for mankind, which is other than mysterious and wonderful ; but the great and astonishing mystery of godliness is thyself, “ God manifested in the flesh.” Lo, faith itself can never be capable to apprehend a mystery like this. Thou who art a spirit, and therefore immaterial, invisible, to expose thyself to the view of earthen eyes ; thou who art an infinite spirit, to be enwrapped in flesh ; thou, an all-glorious eternal spirit, to put on the rags of human mortality ; thou, the great Creator of all things, to become a creature ; thou, the omnipotent God, to subject thyself to miserable frailty and infirmity ; O mystery, transcending the full apprehension of even glorified souls ! If but one of thy celestial spirits have, upon thy gracious mission, assumed a visible shape, and therein appeared to any of thy servants of old, it hath been held a spectacle of so dreadful astonishment, that it could not be consistent with life ; even so much honour was thought no less than deadly ; neither could the patient make any other account, than to be killed with the kindness of that glory : what shall we say then, that thou who art the God of those spirits, and therefore infinitely more glorious than all the hierarchy of heaven, vouchafedst, not in a vanishing apparition, but in a settled state of many years continuance, to shew thyself in our flesh, and to converse with men in their own shape and condition ? O great mystery of godliness, “ God manifested in the flesh ;” so great, that the

holy ambition of the heavenly angels could not reach higher, than the desire to look down into it.

But, O Saviour, that which raised the amazement at the appearance of thine angels, was their resplendent glory ; whereas that which heightens the wonder of thy manifestation to men, is the depth of thine abasement. Although thou wouldest not take the nature of angels, yet why wouldest thou not appear in the lustre and majesty of those thy best creatures ? Or since thou wouldest be a man, why wouldest thou not come as the chief of men, commanding kings and princes of the earth to attend thy train ? Thou whose the earth is and the fulness thereof, why wouldest thou not raise to thyself a palace comprised of all those precious stones which lie hid in the close coffers of that thine inferior treasury ? Why did not thy court glitter with pearl and gold, in the rich furnitures and gay suits of thy stately followers ? Why was not thy table furnished with all the delicacies that the world could afford ? O Saviour, it was the great glory of thy mercy, that, being upon earth, thou wouldest abandon all earthly glory. There could not be so great an exaltation of thy love to mankind, as that thou wouldest be thus low abased. Manifested then thou wert, but manifested in a despicable obscurity. Whether shall I more wonder, that, being “ God blessed for ever,” thou wouldest become man ; or that, condescending to be man, thou wouldest take upon thee the shape of a servant, a servant to those whose Lord, whose God thou wert ?

What proportion could there be, O blessed Jesu, betwixt a God and a man, betwixt finite and infinite ? The only power of thy everlasting and unmeasurable love hath so reduced one of these to the other, that both are united in that glorious person of thine, to make up an absolute Saviour of mankind. O the height and depth of this super-celestial mystery, that the infinite Deity and finite flesh should meet in one subject ! yet so as the humanity should not be absorbed of the Godhead, nor the Godhead coerced by the humanity, but both inseparably united ; that the Godhead is not humanized, the humanity is not Deified ; both are indivisibly conjoined ; conjoined so, as without confusion distinguished. So wert thou, O God,

“manifested in the flesh,” that thou, the Word of thine eternal Father, wert “made flesh, and dwelledst amongst us; and we” men “beheld thy glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Yet so wert thou made flesh, as not by conversion into flesh, but as by assumption of flesh to thine eternal Deity; assumption, not into the nature of the Godhead, but into the person of thee who art God everlasting. O mystery of godliness, incomprehensibly glorious! Cease, cease, O human curiosity; and where thou canst not comprehend, wonder and adore.

But, O Saviour, was it not enough for thee to be “manifested in flesh?” Did not that elementary composition carry in it abasement enough, without any further addition? since for God to become man was more, than for all things to be redacted to nothing; but that in the rank of miserable manhood, thou wouldest humble thyself to the lowest of humanity, and become a servant? Shall I say more? I can hear Bildad, the Shuhite, say, “Man is a worm;” and I hear him who was a noble type of thee, say, as in thy person, “I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people.” O Saviour, in how despicable a condition do I find thee exhibited to the world! lodged in a stable; cradled in a manger; visited by poor shepherds; employed in a homely trade; attended by mean fishermen; tempted by presumptuous devils; persecuted by the malice of envious men; exposed to hunger, thirst, nakedness, weariness, contempt! How many slaves, under the vassalage of an enemy, fare better than thou didst from ingrateful man whom thou camest to save! Yet all these were but a mild and gentle preface to those thy last sufferings, wherewith thou wert pleased to shut up this scene of mortality. There I find thee sweating blood in thine agony; crowned with thorns; bleeding with scourges; buffeted with cruel hands; spat upon by impure mouths; laden with thy fatal burden; distended upon that torturing cross; nailed to that tree of shame and curse; reviled and insulted upon by the vilest of men; and at last, that no part of thy precious blood might remain unshed, pierced to the heart by the spear of a late and impertinent malice.

Thus, thus, O God and Saviour, wouldst thou be “manifested in the flesh,” that the torments of thy flesh and thy spirit might be manifested to that world which thou camest to redeem. Thus wast thou “wounded for our transgressions;” thus wast thou “bruised for our iniquities;” thus were the chastisements of our peace upon thee; and thus with thy stripes are we healed. O blessed, but still incomprehensible mystery of godliness; God thus manifested in the flesh, in weakness, contempt, shame, pain, death!

Once only, O blessed Jesu, while thou wert wayfaring upon this globe of earth, didst thou put on glory; even upon Mount Tabor, in thy heavenly transfiguration. Then and there did thy face shine as the sun, and thy raiment was white as the light. How easy had it been for thee to have continued this celestial splendor to thy humanity all the whole time of thy sojourning upon earth, that so thou mightest have been adored of all mankind! How would all the nations under heaven have flocked unto thee, and fallen down at the feet of so glorious a majesty! What man in all the world would not have said with Peter, “Lord, it is good for us to be here?” Or if it had pleased thee to have commanded Moses and Elias to wait upon thee in thy mediatory perambulation, and to attend thee at Jerusalem on the mount of Sion, as they did in the mount of Tabor; whom hadst thou not, in a zealous astonishment, drawn after thee? But, it was thy will and the pleasure of thy heavenly Father, that this glorious appearance should soon be overshadowed with a cloud; and as those celestial guests, now in the midst of thy glory, spent their conference about thy bitter sufferings and thine approaching departure out of the world, so wert thou, for the great work of our redemption, willing to be led from the mount Tabor to mount Calvary, from the height of that glory to the lowest depth of sorrow, pain, exinanition.

Thus vile wert thou, O Saviour, in the flesh; but in this vileness of flesh, manifested to be God. How did all thy creatures, in this extremity of thine abasement, agree to acknowledge and celebrate thine infinite Deity! The angels came down from heaven to visit and attend thee; the sun pulled in his head, as abhorring to look

upon the sufferings of his Maker; the earth was covered over with darkness, and quaked for the horror of that indignity which was offered to thee in that bloody passion; the rocks rent; the graves opened themselves, and sent up their long since putrefied tenants to wait upon thee, the Lord of life, in thy glorious resurrection: so that thou, in thy despised and crucified flesh, wert abundantly manifested to be the almighty God of heaven and earth.

O blessed Saviour, thou, the true "God manifested in the flesh," be thou pleased to manifest unto the soul of thy servant the unspeakable riches of thy love and mercy to mankind in that great work of our redemption. Vouchsafe to affect my heart with a lively sense of that infinite goodness of thine towards the wretchedest of thy creatures; that for our sake thou camest down and clothedst thyself in our flesh; and clothedst that pure and holy flesh with all the miseries that are incident to this sinful flesh of ours; and wast content to undergo a bitter, painful, ignominious death from the hands of man; that by dying thou mightest overcome death, and ransom him from that hell to which he was, without thee, irrecoverably forfeited, and fetch him forth to life, liberty, and glory. O, let me not see only, but feel this thy great mystery of godliness effectually working me to all hearty thankfulness for so inestimable a mercy; to all holy resolutions to glorify thee, in all my actions, in all my sufferings. Didst thou, O Saviour, being God eternal, take flesh for me; and shall not I, when thou callest, be willing to lay down this sinful flesh for thee again? Wert thou content to abridge thyself, for the time, not only of thy heavenly magnificence, but of all earthly comforts, for my sake; and shall not I, for thy dear sake, renounce all the wicked pleasures of sin? Didst thou wear out the days of thy flesh in poverty, toil, reproach, and all earthly hardship; and shall I spend my time, in pampering this flesh in wanton dalliance, in the ambitious and covetous pursuit of vain honours and deceivable riches? Blessed Lord, thou wert manifested in the flesh, not only to be a ransom for our souls, but to be a precedent for our lives: far, far be it from me thus to imitate the great pattern of holiness. O Jesu, the Author and Finisher of my faith and salva-

tion, teach me to tread in thy gracious steps; to run with patience the race that is set before me; to endure the cross, to despise the shame; to be crucified to the world; to work all righteousness.

How easily could I be drawn to envy the privilege of those eyes which saw thee here walking upon earth, O God and Saviour, in the days of thy manifesting thyself in flesh! O, what a happy spectacle was this, to see the face of him in whom the Godhead dwelt bodily! All the world is not worth such a sight. Whither could I not wish to go to see but a just portraiture of that shape, wherein thou wert pleased to converse with men?

But thy holy apostle checks this useless curiosity in me, while he says, "If we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him so no more," 2 Cor. v. 16. It is not the outside of thy human form, the view whereof can make us more holy or more happy. Judas saw thee, as well as he that lay in thy bosom; those saw thee that maligned and persecuted thee, and shall once again see thee to their utmost horror, see him whom they pierced. They saw that flesh in which God was manifested; they saw not "God manifested in the flesh." It is our great comfort and privilege, that it was flesh wherein God was manifested; but it is not in the flesh, but in the Deity, to render us blessed.

O Saviour, I dare not beg of thee so to manifest thyself to me, as thou didst to thy chosen vessel in his way to Damascus; or to the first martyr in the storm of his lapidation: these miraculous manifestations are not for my meanness to sue for. But let me never cease to crave of thee a double manifestation of thyself to me. Be pleased to manifest thyself to me in the clear illuminations of thy Spirit; let me by the eyes of my faith clearly see thee both laying in the manger, and walking upon earth, and tempted in the wilderness, and arraigned in the judgment-hall, and suffering upon Calvary, and rising out of thy tomb; and ascending from thy Olivet, and reigning in heaven, and there interceding for me: and, after my approaching dissolution, let my soul see thee in that glorified flesh, wherein thou wert manifested to the world;

and in the majesty of that all-glorious Deity, which assumed it to that ever blessed society of glory.

It was thy mercy, O God, that thou wouldest not keep up thyself close in thine eternal, spiritual, and incomprehensible essence, unknown to thy creatures upon earth; but that thou wouldest be manifested to the world. It was yet thy further mercy, that thou wert not only pleased to manifest thyself to man, in the wonderful works of thy creation, (since those invisible things of thine are understood, and clearly seen by the things that are made, even thine eternal power and Godhead) but to manifest thyself yet more clearly to us in thy sacred word, the blessed oracles of thine eternal truth. But it was the highest pitch of thy mercy, that thou wouldest manifest thyself yet more to us in the flesh. Thou mightest have sent us thy gracious messages by the hands of thine angels, those glorious ministering spirits that do continually attend thy throne: this would not content thee; but such was thy love to us forlorn wretches, that thou wouldest come thyself to finish the work of our redemption. Neither didst thou think it enough to come to us in a spiritual way, imparting thyself to us by secret suggestions and inspirations, by dreams and visions; but wouldest vouchsafe openly to be manifested in our flesh.

How then, O my God, how wert thou “manifested in the flesh?” Was not the flesh thy veil? Heb. x. 20. And wherefore serves a veil, but to hide and cover? Did not thy Deity then lie hid and obscured, while thou wert here on earth, under the veil of thy flesh? How then wert thou “manifested in that flesh,” wherein thou didst lie obscured? Surely thou wert certainly manifested in respect of thy presence, in that sacred flesh of thine; though, for the time, thy power and majesty lay hid under the veil. Sometimes thou wert pleased, that this sun of thy Deity should break forth in the glorious beams of divine operations, to the dazzling of the eyes of men and devils, to the full eviction of thine omnipotent power against thy envious gainsayers; at other times thou wert content it should be clouded over with the dim and dusky appearances of human infirmity. The more thou wert obscured,

the more didst thou manifest thy most admirable humility and unparallelable love to mankind, whose weakness thou disdainedst not to take up; and the more thou didst exert thy power in thy miraculous works, the more didst thou glorify thyself, and vindicate thine almighty Deity thus “manifested in the flesh.” O that thou wouldest enable me to give thee the due praise, both of thine infinite mercy in this thine humble obscurity, and of thy divine omnipotence; who, as thou wert “manifested in the flesh,” so wast also “justified in the Spirit.”

SECTION III.

Justified in the Spirit.

HE that should have seen thee, O Saviour; working in Joseph's shop, or walking in the fields or streets of Nazareth, or journeying towards Jerusalem, would have looked upon thee as a mere man; neither did thy garb or countenance bewray any difference in thee from the ordinary sort of men. So did thy Godhead please to conceal itself for a time in that flesh, wherein thou wouldest be manifested. It was thine all-working and co-essential Spirit, by whose evident testimonies and mighty operations thy Deity was irrefragably made good to the world.

If the doubtful sons of men shall, in their peevish infidelity, be apt to renew the question of John's disciples, “Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?” thine ever blessed and co-eternal Spirit hath fully justified thee for that only true, absolute, perfect Mediator, by whom the great work of man's redemption is accomplished. While the gates of hell want neither power, nor malice, nor subtlety, it is not possible that thy divine person should want store of enemies. These, in all successions of times, have dared to open their blasphemous mouths against thy blessed Deity; but against all their hellish oppositions, thou wert still and shalt be ever justified by thy co-omnipotent Spirit, in those convictive wonders which thou wroughtest upon earth, in those miraculous gifts and graces which thou pouredst out upon men, in that glorious resurrection and ascension of thine,

wherein thou didst victoriously triumph over all the powers of death and hell.

Lo, then, ye perverse Jews and scoffing Gentiles that are still ready to upbraid us with the impotency and sufferings of a despised Redeemer, and to tell us of the rags of his manger, of the homeliness of his education, of his temptation and transportation by the devil, of his contemptible train, of his hunger and thirst, of his weariness and indigence, of his whips and thorns, of his agony in the garden of Gethsemane, of his opprobrious crucifixion on Calvary, of his parted garments and his borrowed grave; is not this he to whose homely cradle a glorious and supernatural star guided the sages of the east for their adoration? Is not this he whose birth, declared by one glorious angel, was celebrated by a multitude of the heavenly host with that divine anthem of, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men?" Is not this he that filled the world with his divine and beneficial miracles; healing all diseases by his word, restoring limbs to the lame, giving eyes to the born blind, casting out devils, raising the dead, commanding winds and seas, acknowledged by an audible voice from heaven? Is not this he whom the very ejected devils were forced to confess to be the Son of the everliving God? whom the heaven and all the elements owned for their almighty Creator? whose sufferings darkened the sun, and shook the earth, and rent the rocks in pieces? and, lastly, whom the dead saints and the heavenly angels attended in his powerful resurrection and glorious ascension? O Saviour, abundantly "justified in the Spirit" against all the malignances of men and devils!

If thy malicious persecutors, whose hand was in thy most cruel crucifixion, shall, for the covering of their own shame, blazon thee for a deceiver of the people, how convincingly wert thou "justified in the Spirit" by the dreadful and miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost in the cloven and fiery tongues, and that sudden variety of language for the spreading of the glory of thy name over all the nations of the earth!

If the unbelieving world, bewitched with their former superstition, shall furiously oppose thy name and gospel

in the times immediately succeeding, how notably art thou “justified in the Spirit” by the sudden stopping of the mouths of their hellish oracles, by the powerful predications of thy holy apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and doctors: seconded by such undeniable miracles, as shamed and astonished, if not won the gainsayers!

But, O Saviour, being thus clearly “justified in the Spirit” against the old spite of hell, with what shame and horror do I see thine eternal Godhead called into question, by the misgoverned wits of certain late misnamed Christians! who, as if they would raise up cursed Arius from his hateful grave, have dared to renew those blasphemous cavils against thy sacred person, which, with so great authority and full evidence of the Spirit, were long since cried down to that hell, whence, to the great contumely of heaven, they were most wickedly sent up into the world. Woe is me, their damned founder did not send down his soul into that fatal draught in a more odious way, than these his followers vent themselves upward in most unsavory and pestilent contradictions to thee, the Lord of life and glory. But even against these art thou “justified in the Spirit,” speaking in thy divine scriptures, whose evident demonstrations do fully convince their calumnies and false suggestions, and vindicate thy holy name and blessed Deity from all their devilish and frivolous argutations.

Is there any weak soul that makes doubt of thy plenary satisfaction for his sin, of the perfect accomplishment of the great work of man’s redemption? How absolutely art thou justified, O blessed Jesu, in the Spirit, in that thou raisedst thyself from the dead; quitting that prison of the grave, whence thou couldest not have come till thou hadst paid the utmost farthing, wherein we stood indebted to heaven!

O Saviour, not more concealed in the flesh, than manifestly “justified in the Spirit” for my all-sufficient Redeemer; not more meekly yielding to death for our offences, than powerfully raised up again for our justification; how should I bless and praise thee, both for thine humble self-dejection in respect of thine assumed flesh, and for thy powerful justification in thine infinite and eternal Spirit! That Holy Ghost, whereby thou wert con-

ceived in the womb of the virgin, justified thee in thy life, death, resuscitation. Now then how confidently can I trust thee with my soul, who hast approved thyself so complete and almighty a Redeemer! O blessed Jesu, with what assurance do I cast myself upon thee for thy present protection, for my future salvation! How boldly can I defy all the powers of darkness, while I am in the hand of so gracious and omnipotent a Mediator! "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." Rom. viii. 33. Even thou, the God who wast "manifested in the flesh" and "justified in the Spirit," shalt justify and save my spirit, soul, and body, in the day of our appearance before thee.

SECTION IV.

Seen of Angels.

O SAVIOUR, it is no mystery, that, being manifested in the flesh, thou wert seen of men; but it is no small part of the great mystery of godliness, that thou who art the God of spirits, wert seen by those heavenly spirits, clothed in flesh. It could not be but great news to the angels, to see their God born, and conversing as man with men. For a man to see an angel, is a matter of much wonder; but for an angel to see God become man, is a far greater wonder, since in this the change concerns an infinite subject; in the other, a finite though incorporeal.

But pause here awhile, O my soul, and enquire a little into these strange spectators. "Seen of angels?" Who or what might those be? Are there any such real, incorporeal, permanent substances? or are they only things of imagination, and extemporary representations of the pleasure of the Almighty? Woe is me, that no error may be wanting to this prodigious age, do we live to see a revivification of the old Sadduceism so long since dead and forgotten? Was Gabriel that appeared and spake to Daniel, nothing but a supernatural phantasm? And what then was the Gabriel that appeared, with the happy news of a Saviour, to the blessed virgin? What are the angels of those little ones, whereof our Saviour speaks, which do always behold the face of his Father in heaven? What were those

angels that appeared to the shepherds, with the tidings and gratulations of the Saviour born at Bethlehem? What was that beneficent spirit that visited Peter in the prison; smote him on the side, to wake him from his sleep; shook off his chains; threw open the iron gate: and rescued him from the bloody hands of Herod? What are those spirits who shall be God's reapers at the end of the world, to cut down the tares and gather the wheat into his barn? Shortly, what were all those spirits, whereof both Testaments are full, which God was pleased to employ in his frequent missions to the earth? Were these phantasms too? Certainly, though there may be many orders, yet there is but one general condition of those angelical attendants on the throne of the Almighty. Even in the Old Testament, was it a supernatural apparition of fancy, that in one night smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt? Was it a supernatural opposition of fancy, that in one night laid a hundred fourscore and five thousand Assyrians dead upon the ground? Could these be any other, than the acts of living and powerful agents? It is not for us to contend about words. Those that are disposed to devise paradoxes, may frame to themselves what senses they please of their own terms. This we are sure of, that the angels are truly existing, spiritual, intelligent, powerful, eviternal creatures; whose being is not exposed to our sense, but evidenced both to our faith and reason: not circumscribed in any gross locality, but truly being where they are, and acting according to their spiritual nature.

Of these angels, O blessed Saviour, wert thou seen manifested in the flesh to their wonder and gratulation. That thou who hadst taken our flesh, wert visible, was no whit strange; herein thou wert a plain and happy object to all eyes: but how the angels, being merely spiritual substances, could see thee, may be part of this great mystery. Doubtless they saw thee both before and ever since thou camest into the world, with eyes, like themselves, spiritual; and not seldom saw thee, being incarnate, with the assumed eyes of those bodies wherein they appeared. Thus they saw, and adored, and proclaimed thee, in thy first salutation of the world, when thou layest in that homely posture in the manger at Bethlehem; singing that sweet and celes-

tial carol at thy nativity, "Glory to God in the highest." They saw thee in the wild desert, where no creatures appeared to thee, but either beasts or devils; there they saw thee, pined with fasting, conflicted with the prince of darkness; they saw thee foiling that presumptuous enemy, not without wonder doubtless at the boldness of that daring spirit, and joyful applause at thy happy victory; they saw thee, but as knowing there was no use of seconds in this duel of thine, unseen of thee till the full end of that great combat; then they shewed themselves to thee, as willing to be known to have been the secret witnesses of the fight, and glad congratulators of thy triumph; then they came and ministered unto thee. Never were they but ready to have visibly attended thee, hadst thou been pleased to require so sensible a service; but the state of a servant which thou chusedst to undergo, suited not with the perpetuity of so glorious a retinue. Whether therefore they were seen to thee, or not seen, it was their great honour and happiness, and a main part of the great mystery of godliness, that thou who art the true God manifested in the flesh, wert "seen of angels."

They saw thee in the garden, in thy sad agony; and if angels could have been capable of passion in that state of their glory, could have been no doubt content to suffer in and with thee. With what eyes do we think they looked upon thy bloody sweat, and the frowns of thy heavenly Father which they saw bent against thee in our persons, for the sin of mankind which thou camest to expiate? Now in this doleful condition, so wert thou "seen of angels," that the angels were seen of thee; for, lo, "there appeared an angel from heaven strengthening" thee. O the deep humiliation of God manifested in the flesh, that thou, O Jesu, the God and Lord of all the angels of heaven, shouldest, in this bloody conflict with thy Father's wrath for our sins, need and receive comfort from a created angel, thy servant!

Whilst thou wert grappling with the powers of darkness, there was no need of aid; only, after the fight, "angels came and ministered" to thee; but now that thou must struggle under the wrath of thy Father for man's sin, there was use of the consolation of one of those angels, whereof

thou commandedst millions. O blessed Saviour, had not the face of thy heavenly Father been clouded to thee, standing in the stead of our guiltiness, it had been no less than presumption in any finite power, to tender thee any suggestions of comfort; but now, alas, those beatifical beams were so, for the time, hid from thine eyes, and the sweet influences of light and joy arising therefrom, were, for that sad instant, suspended, so as nothing appeared to thee that while, but the darkness of displeasure and horror; now therefore the comforts of a creature could not be but seasonable and welcome, so that thou disdainedst not to be strengthened by an angel. Extreme distress looks not so much to the hand that brings supply, as to the supply it brings. If but one of thy three drowsy clients could have shaken off his sleep, and have let fall to thee some word of consolation in that heavy fit of thine, thou hadst not refused it; how much less, the cordial intimations of a heavenly monitor! Neither was it improper for thee who wast content to be made "a little lower than the angels," to receive some spiritual aid from the hands of an angel.

What then, O Saviour, was the strengthening which thou receivedst from this officious spirit, in this pang of thine agony? Doubtless it was not any communication of an additional power to bear up under that heavy pressure of the sins of the whole world, which drew from thee those sweats of blood; no angel in heaven was able to contribute that to the Son of God; but it was a sweet and forcible representation to thy disconsolate humanity of the near approach of a happy elutation out of those torments of thy sufferings, and of the glorious crown of thy victory immediately succeeding.

And now soon after, those angels that saw thee sweating in thine agony and bleeding on thy cross, saw thee also triumphing over death in thy resurrection: they attended thee joyfully in the vault of thy sepulchre, and saw thee trampling upon the last enemy, being then suitably habited to so blessed an occasion in white shining vestures.

How gladly were they employed about that most glorious solemnity, both as actors in the service, and as the first heralds of thy victories over death! I find one of them obsequiously making ready for thy coming out of those

chambers of death upon thine Easter morning ; rolling away that massy stone which the vain care of thine adversaries had laid, curiously sealed, upon the mouth of that cave, for the prevention of thy fore-threatened resurrection ; and sitting upon it with a countenance like lightning, and his garment white as snow ; the terror of whose presence made the guard to shake, and to become as dead men. I find two of them no less glorious, sitting the one at the head, the other at the feet of that bed of earth, whereon thou hadst newly slept. By these angels wert thou both seen and attended ; and, no doubt, but as at thy first coming into the world, when but one angel published thy birth, he was seconded by a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God with hymns of rejoicing for thy nativity ; so when but one or two angels were seen at thy second birth, which was thy glorious resurrection, there were more of that heavenly company invisibly celebrating the joyful triumph of that blessed day ; wherein, having conquered death and hell, thou shewedst thyself in a glorified condition to the redeemed world of men.'

After this, when, for the securance of thy resurrection upon which all our faith justly dependeth, thou hadst spent forty days upon earth, I find thee upon mount Olivet at thy most glorious ascension, not seen only, but proclaimed and fore-promised in thy certain and at least equally-glorious return, by the blessed angels ; " And, behold, while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, two men stood by them in white apparel ; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven ? This same Jesus which is taken from you into heaven, shall so come again, as ye have seen him go into heaven," Acts i. 10, 11.

But, O Saviour, these views of thee by thine angels hitherto were but special, and visible even by bodily eyes ; how do I, by the eyes of my soul, see thee both attended up in that heavenly progress, and welcomed into thine imperial heaven, by all the host of those celestial spirits ! no small part of whose perpetual happiness it is to see thee in thy glorified humanity, sitting at the right hand of Majesty. There they enjoy thee ; there they sing continual hallelujahs " to him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever."

SECTION V.

Preached unto the Gentiles.

If thine angels, O blessed Jesu, desired to look into this great and deep mystery of the gospel, their longing is satisfied in the sight of thy blessed incarnation, and the full accomplishment of the great office of thy Mediatorship; since "now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, is made known the manifold wisdom of God," in this wonderful work of man's redemption; "which, from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God, who created all things" by thee. But that "the unsearchable riches of Christ should be preached to the Gentiles," how marvellous an accession is it to the greatness of this divine mystery of godliness! Of old "in Judah was God known; his name was great in Israel: in Salem was his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Sion;" but, in the mean while, we, miserable Gentiles, sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, "without God in the world;" exposed to the displeasure of heaven; tyrannized over by the powers of hell; "strangers from the covenant of promise;" forlorn, without hope of mercy. That therefore, O Saviour, thou vouchsafedst, in the tender bowels of thine infinite compassion, to look down from heaven upon us, and, at the last, graciously to visit us in the clear revelation of the saving truth of thy gospel; to break down the partition-wall, whereby we were excluded from any participation with thee; to own us for thy people, and to admit us unto the fellowship of thy saints; O the wonderful mystery of godliness effectually manifested to us out-cast Gentiles, to our conversion, to our eternal salvation!

What a veil, O God, was spread over all nations! a dark veil of ignorance, of error, of impiety. How did our forefathers walk in their own ways; following the sinful lusts of their own hearts; worshipping dumb idols; sacrificing to all the host of heaven; offering, not their substance only, but their sons and daughters to devils! It was thine own infinite goodness, that moved thee to pity our woeful and despaired condition, and to send thine eternal Son into

the world to be no less “ a light to lighten the Gentiles,” than to be “ the glory of thy people Israel.”

How fully hast thou made good thy gracious promises long since published by thy holy prophets! “ It shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come and see my glory,” Isaiah lxvi. 18. And again; “ It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow to it: and many people shall go and say, Come ye, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths,” Isaiah ii. 2, 3. And again, “ Behold, thus saith the Lord, I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people; and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders,” Isaiah xlix. 22. And again, “ Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not; and nations that know not thee, shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee,” Isa. lv. 5. O blessed then, ever blessed be thy name, O God, that thou wouldest vouchsafe to be made known among us Gentiles, “ Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord, glory and strength: give unto the Lord the glory due to his name,” Psalm xcvi. 7, 8. “ All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee: they shall sing unto thy name,” Psalm lxvi. 4. “ All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.” Psalm xxii. 27.

How did we, O Saviour, of old lie under the pity and contempt of those thy people, which challenged a peculiarity of thy favour! “ We have a little sister,” said thy Jewish spouse, “ and she hath no breasts: what shall we do for our sister, when she shall be spoken for?” Cant. viii. 8. Take no thought for us, O thou once beloved synagogue of the Jews: thy little sister is not only spoken for; but contracted, but happily married to her Lord and Saviour; having been “ betrothed to him for ever, in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness,

and in mercies," Hosea ii. 19 ; so as we can now return our pity to thee, and say, " We had an elder sister which had breasts : but her breasts are long since wrinkled and dried up : what shall we do for our sister in these days of her barrenness and just neglect ? We shall surely pray for our sister, that God would be pleased to return to her in his compassion of old, and restore her to the happy state of her former fruitfulness." We follow them with our prayers ; they us with malice and despite. With how envious eyes did they look upon those first heralds of the gospel, who carried the glad tidings of salvation to the despised Gentiles ! What cruel storms of persecution did they raise against those blessed messengers, whose feet deserved to be beautiful ! wherein their obstinate unbelief turned to our advantage ; for after they had made themselves unworthy of that gospel of peace, that blessing was instantly derived upon us Gentiles, and we happily changed conditions with them. The natural branches of the good olive tree being cut off, we that were of the wild olive, contrary to nature, are grafted in ; Rom. xi. 17. " O the goodness and severity of God ! on them which fell, severity ;" on us which succeeded, goodness. They were once the children, and we the dogs under the table ; the crumbs were our lot, the bread was theirs. Now is the case, through their wilful incredulity, altered ; they are the dogs, and we the children ; we sit at a full table, while their hunger is not satisfied with scraps. " The casting away of them was the reconciling of the world ;" their fall, our exaltation. It is not for us to be high-minded, but to fear.

The great sheet with four corners is let down from heaven, with all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and creeping things, and fowls of the air : we may kill and eat without any difference of clean or unclean ; but even of clean meats we may surfeit. O Saviour, it is thy great mercy, that thou hast been thus long preached amongst us Gentiles ; that we, in the remote ends of the world, have seen the salvation of our God : but if we shall abuse thy grace to wantonness, and walk unanswerably to this freedom of thy gospel, how both just and easy is it for thee to withdraw these blessings from us, and to return

us to the woeful condition of our old forlornness! O let it not be enough, that thou art preached amongst us Gentiles, but do thou work us to a holy obedience of thy blessed gospel. Reclaim us from our abominable licentiousness of life, from our hellish heresies of opinion; and teach us to walk worthy of that great salvation which thou hast held forth unto us: so shall it be our happiness, that thou wert preached to us Gentiles; otherwise our condemnation shall be so much the deeper, as our light hath been more clear, and our means more powerful.

SECTION VI.

Believed on in the World.

So poor and despicable, O Saviour, wouldst thou have thy coming in the flesh, that it is no marvel if the vain world utterly disregarded thee; for what is the misjudging world led by, but by outward pomp and magnificence? Yea, thy very domestic followers, after so long acquaintance with thy person and doctrine, even when thou wert risen from the dead, could think of the royalty of a temporal kingdom to be restored to Israel: and still the perverse generations of Jewish infidels, after the conviction of so many hundred years, gape for an earthly monarchy of their expected Messiah. That therefore appearing to the world in so contemptible means, so born, so living, so dying, thou shouldest be universally "believed on in the world," is the just wonder of the mystery of godliness.

It was the largeness of thy divine bounty to allow thy gospel to be preached to every creature; but, alas, it is liberally preached, sparingly received. "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Isaiah liii. 1. It was the complaint of thy chosen vessel, the doctor of the Gentiles, "We preach Christ crucified; to the Jews, a stumbling block; to the Greeks, foolishness," 1 Cor. i. 23. What a power therefore is there in the mystery of godliness, that thou art not preached only, but "believed on in the world!"

Hadst thou exhibited thyself in the magnificence and

majesty of the Son of God; attended, either with the glorious angels of heaven, or the mighty monarchs of the earth; scattering honours and riches upon thy followers in abundance; how large a train wouldest thou have had! how would all the earth have rung with hosannas to the Highest! But now that thou wouldest come as the Son of man; in the homeliest condition of birth, education, life, and death; not having so much as a house wherein to put thy head, or a grave wherein to lay thy dead body; now that thou wouldest suffer thyself to be spat upon, scourged, crucified, reviled; that the stubborn hearts of men should be so convinced by the truth and power of thy Deity, that "thou art believed on in the world," is the great mystery of godliness.

The powers of darkness could not but see their kingdom shaken, but by thy coming down to the earth upon this errand of thy mediation: how busy and violent therefore were those gates of hell in opposing so glorious a work! How did they stir up cruel tyrants, in the first dawning of thy gospel, furiously to persecute this way unto death! What exquisite torments of all kinds did they devise for the innocent professors of thy name! How drunken was the earth with the blood of thy martyrs in all parts! And when they saw how little force could prevail, since this palm-tree grew the more by depression, how did they set their wits on work in attempting by fraud to bring about their cursed designs! How cunningly did they go about to undermine that wall which they could not batter! Now whole troops of the skilfullest engineers of hell are sent up, by damned heresies to blow up and overthrow that truth which they could not beat down. One while thine eternal Deity, another while thy sacred humanity, is impugned by those who yet style themselves Christians. One while either of thy natures, another while thy entire person, is laid at by those that profess themselves thy friends and clients. One while thine offices, another while thy scriptures, are opposed by those who yet would seem thine. And though their insinuations have been so craftily carried and their colours so well laid, that no small part of the world hath been for the time beguiled by them and drawn into a plausible mis-

belief, yet still great hath the truth ever been, and ever prevailed ; happily triumphing over those damnable heresies that have dared to lift up their head against her, and chasing them into their hell : so as, in spite of men and devils, the great mystery of godliness is gloriously vindicated, and God manifested in weak flesh is “ believed on in the world.”

The world is not all of one making. There is a world of creatures not capable of belief : there is a world of men, that “ lieth in wickedness,” refusing to believe : there is a world of faithful souls that do believe, and, in believing, are saved : and O, blessed Saviour, that thou wouldest graciously enlarge this world of believers !

Woe is me, what a world of this world of men lies still under the damnable estate of unbelief ! Alas for those poor savage Indians, that know nothing of a God ; which, out of their fear and tyrannical superstition, worship devils, that they may not hurt them ! for those ignorant and woefully blindfolded Mahometans, that are not allowed to see any more, than one blink of thee, as a great prophet ; being taught to blaspheme thy Deity, and to enslave their faith to a wretched impostor ! for those obstinate Jews, that are wilfully blind, and will not see the light of that truth concerning thee their Messiah, which shineth forth clearly to them in the writings of the prophets, in the undeniable accomplishment of all former predictions, in the powerful conviction of miraculous works ! What Christian is there, whose bowels do not yearn, whose heart doth not bleed, at the thought of so many millions of miserable unbelievers ?

O thou, the God of infinite mercy and compassion, in whose hands are all the hearts of the sons of men, look graciously from heaven upon the dark souls of these poor infidels, and enlighten them with the saving knowledge of the great mystery of godliness. Let the beams of thy gospel break forth unto them, and work them to a sound belief in thee their God, manifested in the flesh. Fetch home into thy fold all those that belong to thy merciful election. Bring in “ the fulness of the Gentiles ;” “ gather together the outcasts of Israel ;” and glorify thyself in completing a world of believers.

And for us on whom the ends of the world are come, as we have been graciously called to the comfortable notice of this mystery of godliness, and have professed and vowed a steadfast belief in thy name, so keep us, by thy good Spirit, in a holy and constant avowance of all those main truths concerning thy sacred person, natures, and offices, unto our last end: for thou seest, O blessed Jesu, that there is now such a hell of the spirits of error broken loose into the world, as if they meant to evacuate this part of the mystery of godliness, Christ “believed on in the world.” O do thou, by thy mighty power, restrain and quell those pernicious heresies, and send down those wicked spirits back to their chains; so as our most holy faith may ever remain inviolable till the day of thy glorious return!

Neither let us sit down contented that we hold fast and believe the mere history of thy life, death, and resurrection; without which as we cannot be saved, so with it alone we cannot; but do thou, by thy good Spirit, work and settle in our souls a sound, lively, operative, justifying faith in thee; whereby we may not only believe on thee as a common Saviour, but believe in thee as ours; bringing thee home to our hearts, and confidently relying upon thee for the acquittance of all our sins, and for our eternal salvation. O that thou mightest be thus “believed on in the world;” and, if not by them in the notion of their universality, yet by us who profess thy name, to thy great glory and our everlasting comfort!

SECTION VII.

Received up into Glory.

IN these occurrences on the earth, “great is the mystery of godliness;” but the highest pitch of this great mystery, O Saviour, is, that thou, thus manifested in our flesh, wert “received up into glory,” even that celestial glory which thou enjoyest in the highest heavens, sitting on the right-hand of Majesty; seen and adored by all that blessed company of the souls of just men made perfect, and the innumerable troops of glorious angels.

If some erroneous fancies have placed their heaven here below upon earth, ours is above; and so is thine, O blessed Jesu, who wert taken up in glory. Thou couldst not be taken up to any earthly ascent, since thou tookest thy farewell on the top of mount Olivet; but from this globe of earth, thou ascendedst through the skies to that empyreal heaven: there thou remainest in glory infinite and incomprehensible. The many and intentive beholders of thy last parting, did not cast their eyes down into the valley; neither did see cause, with the fifty sons of the prophets, to seek for thee, as they would needs do for Elijah, in vallies and mountains: they saw and worshipped thee, leisurely ascending up through the region of this lower heaven till a cloud intercepted thee from their sight; neither then could easily be taken off, either by the interposition of that dark body, or by the interpellation of angels.

And now, O blessed Saviour, how is my soul ravished with the meditation of thy glorious reception into thy heaven! Surely if the inhabitants of those celestial mansions may be capable of any increase of joy, they then both found and shewed it, when they saw and welcomed thee entering, in thy glorified humanity, into that thy eternal palace of blessedness: and if there could be any higher or sweeter ditty of hallelujah, it was then sung by the choir of angels and saints. And may thy poor servants, warfaring and wandering here upon earth, ever second them in those heavenly songs of praise and gratulations; for wherein stands all our safety, hope, comfort, happiness, but in this, that thou, our Jesus, art "received up into glory;" and, having conquered all diverse powers, sittest on the right-hand of God the Father, crowned with honour and majesty?

O Jesu, thou art our head, we are thy body; how can the body but participate of the glory of the head? As for thyself therefore, so for us, art thou possessed of that heavenly glory: as thou sufferedst for us, so for us thou also reignest. Let every knee therefore bow unto thee, "of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth." O blessed be thy name for ever and ever. "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power,

and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine: thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head over all," 1 Chr. xxix. 11.

And now, O Saviour, what a superabundant amends is made to thy glorified humanity for all thy bitter sufferings upon earth! Thine agony was extreme, but thy glory is infinite; thy cross was heavy, but thy crown transcendently glorious; thy pains were unconceivably grievous, but short; thy glory everlasting. If thou wert scorned by men, thou art now adored by angels: thou that stoodest before the judgment seat of a Pilate, shalt come, in all heavenly magnificence, to judge both the quick and the dead. Shortly, thou which wouldest stoop to be a servant upon earth, rulest and reignest for ever in heaven, as the King of eternal glory.

O then, my soul, seeing thy Saviour is received up into this infinite glory, with what intention and fervour of spirit shouldest thou fix thine eyes upon that heaven where he lives and reigns. How canst thou be but wholly taken up with the sight and thought of that place of blessedness? How canst thou abide to grovel any longer on this base earth, where is nothing but vanity and vexation; and refrain to mind the things above, where is all felicity and glory? With what longings and holy ambition shouldest thou desire to aspire to that place of eternal rest and beatitude, into which thy Saviour is ascended; and with him to partake of that glory and happiness, which he hath provided for all that love him! O Saviour, it is this clog of wretched infidelity and earthliness, that hangs heavy upon my soul, and keeps me from mounting up into thy presence, and from a comfortable fruition of thee. O do thou take off this sinful weight from me, and raise up my affections and conversation unto thee. Enable me constantly to enjoy thee by a lively faith here, till by thy mercy I shall be received into glory.

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